DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 192 513 EC 130 175

AUTHOR Brundage, Diane, Ed.
TITLE The Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism Report: 1979.
INSTITUTION Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.; George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. Inst. for Educational Leadership.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 129p.; Photographs may not reproduce well.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications Coordinator, Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036 ($4.00 prepaid)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Education; Black Colleges; Declining Enrollment; Educational Finance; Educational Quality; *Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; Journalism; Minimum Competency Testing; Parent Participation; Serials

ABSTRACT

Based on work done for the 1978 Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism Program, the document contains series of newspaper articles authored by 10 journalists on various educational topics. The 10 series titles and authors are: "Growing Up Gifted in America's Schools" (H. Collins); "Minimum Competency Testing: State Approaches" (J. Covington); "Competency Testing: Seven Case Studies" (R. Frahm); "Indian Education" (G. Fife); "Parent Participation in the Schools" (D. Granat); "Education and the Voter: School Spending at the Polls" (S. Ivey); "Achieving Quality Education" (R. Janka); "America's Black Colleges: Roots, Rewards, Renewal" (E. Payne); "Declining Enrollments: Studies of Selected Cities" (M. Trammer); and "School Finance in the South: Reform Efforts and the Future" (L. Williams). It is explained that Fellowship journalists meet with educational leaders around the country, observe and study effective school programs, compare the systems they write about with others facing similar challenges, and improve their craft by learning from each other. (SBH)

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The Ford Fellows In Educational Journalism Report:

ED192513

Education of the Gifted and Talented
Minimum Competency Testing
Parent Participation in the Schools
Education and the Tax Revolt
America's Black Colleges
Achieving Quality Education
Declining Enrollments and School Closings
School Finance in the South
Indian Education

Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism
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The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) seeks to strengthen present and potential leadership in American education at the policy level of state and federal government. Established in 1971, IEL is a policy planning and coordinating agency for a number of related educational programs, including Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP), Educational Staff Seminar (ESS), The Associates Program (TAP), "Options in Education," a radio series over National Public Radio, Family Impact Seminar (FIS), Washington Policy Seminar (WPS), Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism (FFEJ), Education of the Handicapped Policy Project (EHPP), and others.

A program of The George Washington University, IEL is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation and by other foundation and federal grants and contracts.

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JUL 1 5 1980

PROGRAMS OF THE INSTITUTE

Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP)
Telephone: 676-5925
Education Policy Fellowship Program (formerly Washington Interns In Education) is a national program designed to provide future leaders in education a year long opportunity to work and learn under the direction of designated policymakers in education or related areas in both the private and public sectors. Funds for the program are provided by federal grants and foundations including Rockefeller, Ford, Cleveland, The U.S. Office of Education and the National Institute of Education.

Since 1964 the program has placed over 600 mid-career persons in one year internships. Carefully selected sponsors, who pay the Fellow's salary, serve as on the job mentors by demonstrating, through their daily tasks, how educational policy is shaped at the local, state or national level. Fellows who are placed with new sponsors serve primarily at the federal level in Washington. The remaining Fellows participate on an in-service basis and remain in their existing positions, but with increased responsibilities and involvement during the Fellowship year. Weekly seminars and conferences are held for the Fellows at both the Washington, D.C. site and the eleven state sites. National meetings of Fellows with other special groups contribute further to their understanding of educational policymaking. Costs of recruitment, placement, and programs are borne by the EPF Program.

Educational Staff Seminar (ESS)
Telephone: 676-5948
Educational Staff Seminar (ESS) is a professional development program designed for staff members employed by the Executive and Legislative Branches of the federal government in the field of education. It is designed to expose these federal education policymakers to existing programs worth noting around the nation, as well as to innovations, research and emerging ideas in the field. This is accomplished through luncheon and dinner meetings, seminars, and national and international field trips.

Established in 1969, ESS is funded by the Institute and by partial reimbursement from the government agencies served. In fiscal year 1978 ESS conducted 66 programs for over 2036 federal employees.

The Associates Program (TAP)
Telephone: 676-5935
The Associates Program (TAP), begun in 1972, seeks to improve the educational policy process at the state level by bringing together, in informal seminar settings, a state's political leaders, educators, and executive officials to examine and debate educational issues of significance to their states.

TAP seminar programs currently operate in 31 state capitals and in Chicago and are directed by Associates who, working only part-time for IEL, arrange five to ten seminar sessions annually in each of their states.

The TAP network of Associates also provides a communication link between state and federal decisionmakers and serves as an important source of timely information on state educational policymaking.

"Options in Education"
Telephone: 785-6462
IEL and National Public Radio co-produce the "Options in Education" series heard twice weekly over most of NPR's 201 member stations from coast to coast. Voice of America rebroadcasts the two half-hour weekly programs, and IEL makes cassettes and transcripts available at minimum costs. "Options" has received numerous awards from such organizations as: the Association of State Education Department Information Officers (1978), The Education Writers Association (1974, '75 and '76) and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (1974). Funds for "Options in Education" are provided by IEL, National Institute of Education, Carnegie Corporation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other grantors.

Washington Policy Seminar (WPS)
Telephone: 676-5940
The Washington Policy Seminar (WPS) brings select groups of educators and policymakers to the Capital for three to five days of intensive exposure to the people, processes, and institutions which shape federal education policy. Speakers for the Seminar include Members of Congress, Congressional staff, senior officials of the Executive Branch, leaders of educational lobbies and associations, journalists and seasoned "Washington watchers." Funding for the Seminar is provided by IEL general support funds and reimbursement by sponsoring organizations.

Family Impact Seminar (FIS)
Telephone: 296-5330
The Family Impact Seminar seeks to identify and assess the effect on families of a variety of public policies. With a membership of 24 distinguished scholars and policymakers, the Seminar is developing the concept of family impact analysis and testing the utility of this approach to understanding the effect government actions (or inactions) on families. The Seminar has completed case studies of the impact on families of foster care programs, teenage pregnancy policies, and the practice of flexible work schedules. Begun in 1976 with an orientation to federal-level of government, the Seminar has now embarked on a field test of the family impact approach at the state and local levels.

Educational Journalism Fellowships
Telephone: 676-5900
The Institute currently administers two Fellowship programs designed to support and strengthen the popular education press. Both Fellowships provide reporters with a "sabbatical" from the fast-paced immediacy of daily reporting and enable them to pursue a two- to three-month course of independent study of important education issues.

Now in its fourth year, the Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism program has served over 40 education reporters from the print and electronic media. With support from the Ford Foundation and participating news organizations the Ford Fellows conduct major national studies of selected issues.

In its first year, IEL's Journalism Research Fellowship on "What Makes an Effective School" will offer six reporters from different areas of the country an opportunity to conduct an indepth study of the forces and factors that make schools in their state effective. The Fellowship is supported by participating news organizations and the National Institute of Education. Both Journalism Fellowships reflect the conviction that better informed media will be a direct and positive influence for better education.

Education of the Handicapped Policy Project (EHPP)
Telephone: 676-5910
The Education of the Handicapped Policy Project provides forums for the [illegible]ation and discussion of issues a[illegible]m the implementation of 'The Education [illegible]. All Handicapped Children Act'. Begun in October 1977 to keep communication channels open among local, state and federal policymakers as this major new law was implemented, EHPP has broadened the national network of informed individuals to include state and local policymakers, parents and the adult disabled, journalists, and community leaders. The Project works collaboratively with the other programs of the Institute, using the networks and seminars available through EPFP, TAP, WPS and FFEJ as ways to highlight important issues policymakers must resolve to meet state and federal mandates to educate all handicapped children. EHPP also publishes policy papers, and recently has focussed its efforts on understanding and building collaborative relationships between special education and other service delivery agencies. Under a new grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, EHPP has recruited and is placing ten mid-career Fellows in important policy positions in the Federal government and national education associations. EHPP is funded by a contract from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

Expanding Opportunities in Educational Research (EOER)
Telephone: 676-5935
Expanding Opportunities in Educational Research (EOER), in its first year, mobilizes IEL programs and resources to promote access for more *women and members of minority groups* to positions of responsibility in educational research. EOER, working with WPS, will provide 65 carefully selected women and minority researchers an intensive five-day orientation to the processes and forces that shape educational policymaking at the federal level. EOER, working with EPFP, will offer year-long fellowships to 13 mid-career women and minority researchers, placing them with senior research mentors in Washington and several states. And working through the TAP network, EOER will provide 30 or more women and minority educational researchers opportunities to share their expertise with state-level policymakers. EOER seeks to give greater visibility to the work of women and minority researchers and thereby provide increased opportunities for their research to be used in shaping policy for American education.

The Ford Fellows In Educational Journalism Report: 1979

Journalists on the Issues of:

Education of the Gifted and Talented
Minimum Competency Testing
Parent Participation in the Schools
Education and the Tax Revolt
America's Black Colleges
Achieving Quality Education
Declining Enrollments and School Closings
School Finance in the South
Indian Education

Diane Brundage, Editor

Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism
is a program of The George Washington University's
Institute for Educational Leadership.

Additional copies of *THE FORD FELLOWS IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNALISM REPORT* may be obtained for $4.00 (prepaid) by contacting:

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The views expressed in these articles are those of the journalists and do not represent positions of the Ford Foundation or the Institute for Educational Leadership.

Foreword

Reporters who write about our schools probably touch more heart and purse strings than any other segment of the media. Their coverage influences what happens to 50 million children, three million jobs and the largest single item in most state and local budgets. And with each new educational reform or attack that sweeps this massive and complex system, an already difficult job gets tougher. Competency tests, services for special populations, school finance battles, and a host of new court decisions, among others, continue to alter the schools and affect the quality of education they offer. Each system meets and adapts to these challenges differently, and with varying degrees of success.

To the extent the education media knows and understands the options available to different school systems, their coverage of the local schools—and the services they provide the public—will be stronger and more informed. Since 1976, the Ford Foundation, the Institute for Educational Leadership, and forty innovative news organizations have joined to co-sponsor a Fellowship program that exposes education journalists to the diverse realities of our national education picture.

The Ford Fellowships for Education Journalists offer talented reporters a chance to step back from daily deadline pressures and undertake major national studies of issues important to many local schools throughout the nation. During this three-month Fellowship journalists meet with educational leaders around the country, observe and study effective school programs, compare the systems they write about with others facing similar challenges, and especially, improve their craft by learning from each other. Many of the Fellows' reports and findings provide valuable new information and perspectives on issues facing the education industry. Subsequent experience also shows these reporters write with deeper perception and authority when they return to their jobs.

This publication provides samples of varied and interesting work done by the 1978 Ford Fellows during and after their Fellowships. Primarily, it bears witness to their very great professional talents, but we think it suggests also the value to society of providing them with the time to do intensive work and the opportunity to gain new nationwide perspectives on important education issues.

Samuel Halperin
Director
Institute for Educational Leadership

Diane Brundage
Coordinator
Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism

December 1979
Washington, D.C.

FORD FELLOWS IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNALISM: A DESCRIPTION

The articles in this report are based upon work done for the 1978 Ford Fellows in Educational Journalism Program. Each year, for the past four years, the Fellowship has offered a select group of educational journalists a three-month Fellowship program designed to strengthen the educational media by providing additional resources to working reporters and their news organizations.

The Fellowship is a unique opportunity for educational journalists to go beyond the local news of school board votes and teachers' strikes to undertake a comprehensive study of an issue of major significance to the schools and the society they serve. It is an individually tailored program in which journalists select topics of concern to them and their public to explore through site visits to relevant programs throughout the country, meetings with national experts and authorities, and exposure to current research and background literature. Individual study plans are supplemented by monthly Fellowship seminars that focus on educational issues of interest to the Journalism Fellows and provide time to share and discuss study experiences. In addition to stories based upon the Fellowship, which journalists may choose to do for their news organizations, the program publishes a monograph of Fellowship reports and articles.

Initiated by the Ford Foundation's Advisor on Communications, Fred W. Friendly (formerly of CBS News), and its Vice President for Education, Harold Howe II (former U.S. Commissioner of Education), the Fellowship is a novel, experiential approach to strengthening the educational media. By providing journalists with time and resources for study and travel, the Fellowship seeks to:

*encourage the development of a knowledgeable and effective educational press, equipped to bring both analytical depth and national context to local news coverage;

*provide experienced journalists with an opportunity to conduct a thorough analysis of an issue which will help to clarify and answer some of the questions facing the country's $165 billion education industry.

The Fellowship is coordinated by The George Washington University's Institute for Educational Leadership.

Ford Fellows In Educational Journalism
1978

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Huntly Collins *The Oregonian* Portland, Oregon	**Gifted & Talented Education**
Jimmie Covington *The Commercial Appeal* Memphis, Tennessee	**Competency Based Testing: State Approaches**
Joe Donovan KYW News Radio Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	**Basic Skills**
Gary Fife *United Indian Planners News* Washington, D.C.	**Indian Education**
Robert Frahm *The Journal Times* Racine, Wisconsin	**Competency Based Testing**
Diane Granat *Chicago Daily Herald* Arlington Heights, Illinois	**Parent Power**
Saundra Ivey *The Tennessean* Nashville, Tennessee	**School Finance: Tax Revolt Issues**
Rick Janka *The Milwaukee Sentinel* Milwaukee, Wisconsin	**Achieving Quality Education**
Rosa Morales KCET Television Los Angeles, California	**Desegregation**
Ethel Payne *The St. Louis Sentinel* St. Louis, Missouri	**Black Colleges**
Donald Speich *Los Angeles Times* Los Angeles, California	**Effect of Proposition 13**
Monte Trammer *The Sun* Baltimore, Maryland	**Declining Enrollments and School Closings**
Linda Williams *The South Mississippi Sun* Biloxi, Mississippi	**School Finance Patterns in the South**

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The Oregonian

Portland, Oregon APRIL 15, 1979

First in a Series

Schools Show Renewed Interest In Gifted Students

HUNTLY COLLINS

In five years with the *Oregonian* Huntly Collins covered the Portland schools as well as state education issues. Her work, which included a number of in-debt series on such issues as desegregation, competency testing, education of the handicapped and school finance received awards from the Oregon Education Association, The Education Writers Association and the United Conference of Christians and Jews.

Although it was frequently eclipsed by the press of other issues, gifted and talented education was an emerging concern in this state which had recently begun to provide special education programs for these students. Ms. Collins proposed to undertake a national Fellowship study of gifted and talented education that would provide the public and educators with information on the needs of these special students and the types of programs that could most successfully serve them. In the following news series, and in her report *"Growing Up Gifted in America's Schools,"* Collins offers one of the most current and comprehensive accounts of the services public schools offer gifted and talented children. Her work has served as resource material for educational groups and parents throughout the country.

By HUNTLY COLLINS
of The Oregonian staff

They come from some of the richest suburbs and some of the poorest ghettos.

Contrary to stereotypes about them, they don't all wear horn-rimmed glasses, carry briefcases and turn out to be emotional cripples.

For the most part, they are typical American youth. But they do some things a little bit better and a little bit more imaginatively than other youth.

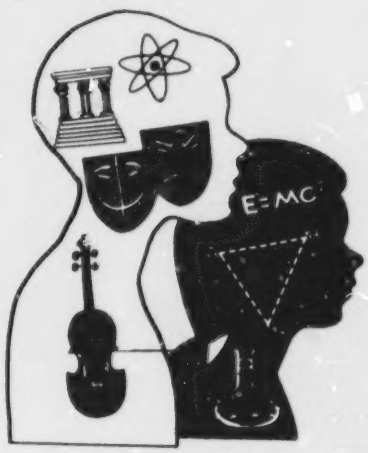
They are the nation's more than 2.5 million gifted and talented children, including 29,000 in Oregon. And across the country, they are starting to shine as school systems begin to pay attention to them:

— In Philadelphia, two sixth-grade girls in a class for the gifted are writing a handbook on divorce. Only the handbook is written for children, not their parents.

— At the Talcott Mountain Science Center outside Hartford, Conn., a 16-year-old student is doing an experiment in chronobiology. The point of it is to figure out the peak learning times of students at a local high school — and then reorganize the school schedule to be in sync.

— In Albany, Ore., Cass Blodgett, 15, is designing a computer-controlled robot. If he can raise the money to build it, Cass hopes the robot can perform humdrum human tasks such as running office errands.

"Ironically, the comeback of the gifted represents our insecurity and loss of confidence in ourselves as a nation," said James Gallagher, a child psychologist at the University of North Caroiina at Chapel Hill and an expert on the education of exceptional children.



"We no longer think we can solve the energy problem, the pollution problems and political problems," Gallagher said. "When we are scared, we care about gifted kids."

The last time that happened was in 1957 after the Russians launched Sputnik. The event ushered in the National Defense Education Act and with it a flurry of programs in the sciences, mathematics and foreign language.

With the advent of the 1960s, however, many of the programs withered as the nation, torn by urban riots, turned its attention to another priority — providing remedial education to the children of the nation's poor.

Today, as the country gropes for educational excellence, the pendulum is again swinging toward students with superior ability. And their advocates argue that equal educational opportunity doesn't mean exactly equal treatment for all students — even in a democracy.

"Giving special support to the disadvantaged or the handicapped, or to the gifted, may seem biased or elitist," said Mary Berry, assistant secretary of education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"But it actually enhances the democratic quality of our schools because it makes it possible for all children to achieve an education that equally meets their needs," she said.

Congress began recognizing the special needs of gifted students in 1972 when it set up the federal Office of Gifted and Talented. But until recently, the office has been funded with only $2.5 million a year — about one dollar for every gifted child in the country.

Last year, however, the gifted got a major boost with passage of the federal Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978.

Among other provisions, it authorizes an increase in federal spending on the gifted to $25 million in fiscal 1979, with the amount escalating to $50 million by 1983.

Whether the amounts actually will be appropriated, however, is questionable.

At the state level, appropriations for the gifted are also on the rise, with total funding by the states jumping from $86.2 million in 1976-77 to $89.4 million in 1977-78.

In Oregon, the 1977 Legislature appropriated $1 million for the gifted, the first sizable sum pegged for that purpose in the state's history.

The money boosted Oregon from among the states which spend the least on gifted students to among those which spend the most.

In 1977-78, Oregon ranked 14th in state support for the gifted, behind such giants as Pennsylvania which spent $20 million and Florida which spent $13.9 million.

But Gov. Vic Atiyeh, citing legislative intent, has proposed a 1979-81 budget which would cut state funding for the gifted in half.

"The legislative intent was not really to develop a continuing program (for the gifted) from the state, but to encourage school districts to get into this," Atiyeh said.

If approved by the Legislature, the proposed cut would come at a time when gifted children, despite the recent surge of interest, are already inadequately served, according to school officials.

Nationally, only 12 percent of the students who are identified as gifted are actually receiving service. In Oregon, about 20 percent of the state's 29,000 gifted students get special help, said Bob Siewert, state consultant for the gifted.

What will happen if the gifted don't get appropriate attention?

Studies indicate that some will drop out of school, while others will drop out psychologically by not performing up to their capacity. Either way, they become a loss to themselves and to society, according to experts.

"You will be eroding the natural resources of the society," said Gallagher. "But you will be doing it in such a slow way that nobody will notice."

"Gifted Definition" Expands To Cover More Children

When the Woolworth's store on 181st Street in Manhattan burned down, Staci Godfrey's son Derek went to his first-grade teacher with one pressing question: What happened to the goldfish?

Ms. Godfrey, a 36-year-old divorcee who lives in Montclair, N.J., thinks she has a gifted son. And under expanded definitions of the gifted, she may.

While the standard Intelligence Quotient test once was the sole measure of giftedness, current definitions include not only students with high IQs but those with superior imaginations.

To some educators, all students are "gifted."

"I choke on the word," said Van Seasholes, principal at Newton South High School in Newton, Mass. "We've tried to establish a broad program with opportunities for all kids."

Under federal guidelines, gifted and talented children are defined as those who are capable of high performance in any of five areas:

— General intellectual ability such as that demonstrated on an IQ test.

— Specific academic aptitude such as a proclivity for mathematics.

— Creative or productive thinking, the kind of thing that Derek did when he wondered about the goldfish.

— Leadership ability.

— And visual and performing arts.

Until recently, the guidelines also included "psychomotor ability," but the 95th Congress eliminated that category, in part because nobody could say what it really meant.

Across the country, most states have incorporated the federal guidelines in their own definitions of gifted students.

Oregon state statutes define giftedness as a demonstrated ability or potential for "a very high level of academic or creative aptitude," but a bill pending before the 1979 Legislature would expand the definition along federal guidelines.

Elsewhere, some states, such as Florida and California, define giftedness exclusively in terms of general intellectual ability as judged by IQ scores.

Essentially, an IQ is the ratio between a child's mental age and life age. While the IQ used to be the litmus test of giftedness, it has come under increasing attack. Some say IQ tests are culturally biased; others say they bear little relationship to achievement in later life.

A theoretical psychologist named J.P. Guilford shattered the sanctity of the IQ test some years ago when he developed the so-called "structure of the intellect," a model that identified 96 different kinds of intelligence.

Standard intelligence tests, he found, measured only a fraction of these.

"The traditional approach to giftedness through the IQ is only about 40 or 50 years out of date," said Calvin Taylor, a researcher at the University of Utah. "An IQ test measures about 12 percent of the talents that a person has."

Taylor has developed what he calls a "multiple talent model," and he has persuaded several school districts around Salt Lake City to use it.

As educators have moved away from the IQ as the exclusive measure of giftedness, they have come up with other ways to identify gifted students. Some of those are:

— Teacher rating scales. Teachers can rate students on such questions as whether the student is a high risk-taker.

— Peer nominations. A class of students, for instance, might be asked to rate their classmates by a number of different criteria such as who asks the most interesting questions in class.

— Demonstrated performance. It might range from playing a musical instrument to building a ham radio set.

— Creativity tests. One popular test gives students a series of line drawings and asks them to turn the lines into interesting pictures and make up stories about the pictures.

— Standardized achievement tests. The tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, can be used to identify students with specific academic talents.

TALENTS — Concept of giftedness has been expanded in many communities, including Montclair, N.J., to include talent in the visual and performing arts, moving away from former practice of a determination by IQ. A bill in the 1979 Oregon Legislature would expand the definition here.

What's the best technique to use? It depends on what kind of program a school system wants to set up, according to experts.

"If you want to make a rabbit stew," says Julian Stanley, an expert on gifted education at Johns Hopkins University, "first you catch a rabbit."

Talent Abounds

Gifted Children Only Look Average

To all appearances, they look like average American children. But they possess extraordinary gifts and talents.

Meet some of them:

— Jennifer Altman, 4, of Brooklyn, N.Y. She's only 37 inches tall, but she whips through the course offerings at P.S. 208, where she is enrolled part time, as if she were on a shopping spree at Macy's.

"The planets spin around the sun," Jennifer explained. "You could go to almost all the planets. But I'd go to Jupiter because it's the biggest and we need to find a place for a lot of people."

Jennifer has an IQ of 150. She's also physically adept. She began dancing at age 2, has already given three dance recitals and is a regular performer on "Sesame Street."

— Terrence Butler, 12, of Washington, D.C. He attends the district's predominantly black Fletcher-Johnson Education Center, where 85 percent of the students come from federally subsidized low-income housing projects.

Terrence, who wants to be a football player, prefers to call himself "Terrence Twinkle Toes Sticky Fingers Crazy Legs Butler."

Besides names, Terrence makes up other things. "I like to go into my room at home and invent stuff," he said. "I can't invent too many things because about all I have to work with is old ink pens and hair rollers."

Terrence did manage to build a telegraph at home, however, and it won him a first prize at a science fair.

— Alice Quillen, 16, of Newton, Mass. At predominantly white, upper-middle class

GENIUSES AT WORK — Identical twins Rebecca and Deborah Doubek, 9, are among 4,000 students in part-time enrichment classes in Pennsylvania, which mandates gifted education and leads the nation in spending for the gifted.

Newton South High School, she belongs to the hiking club, works on the stage crew and runs track.

But Alice is also a science and math wizard who has already been invited to attend Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"I don't think Alice knows she's a girl yet, but she's one of the brightest kids I've ever worked with," said Lloyd Gottlieb, her biology teacher.

— And Terry Miller, 13, of New Haven, Conn. The other kids at school call him "Mr. Professor," but he loves what most kids love — animals.

At home, Terry has two gerbils, a canary and a dog. He observes them and carefully records his observations every day.

"People could learn from animals if they watched them better," he said. "Let's say you had a herd of gazelles and a herd of zebra and a herd of antelope. They don't always fight each other. They learn to get along."

What about animals that prey on others? "It's true that some animals kill other animals in order to survive," Terry replied. "But a man doesn't have to kill to stay alive; he kills because he wants to."

Schools Worried By Cutback Prospects

Oregon's fledgling programs for gifted students would suffer a major setback under budget cuts proposed by Gov. Vic Atiyeh

School officials from Portland to Medford say the cuts would not only prevent expansion of programs, but would force rollbacks in existing services.

Even under current funding, Oregon schools serve only about one-fifth of the estimated 29,000 gifted and talented students in the state.

"Under the governor's recommendations, we would have to cut about 40 percent of the budget," said Bob Siewert, state consultant for the gifted. "That means that you either cut 40 percent of the kids or 40 percent of the programs."

To stave off the cut, advocates for the gifted — including contingents of students from around the state — are planning a lobbying assault on the Capitol April 24 when the governor's proposed budget goes before a Ways and Means subcommittee of the Oregon Legislature.

At issue is whether to continue the $1 million-a-year funding level established for gifted students by the 1977 Legislature. The money, which set up a major state-funded program for the gifted for the first time, was pegged for spending in 1978-79.

The funds began flowing to school districts last fall, and have been matched with local dollars to provide $2.51 million worth of services to more than 4,000 gifted students from 61 school districts.

"We have an excellent start," Siewert said. "A million dollars has generated $2.51 million in actual services. That's good for a first-year program."

To maintain the program at its present level, the Oregon Board of Education has asked for $2.28 million in the coming biennium. As part of state penny-pinching, however, Atiyeh has recommended only $1.14 million over the two years.

"The appropriation in the last biennium was $1 million," Atiyeh said. "It was one of those deceptive things, however, because the funds were to be spent in one year."

Atiyeh said the 1977 Legislature intended the funds to serve as seed money to encourage school districts to set up locally funded programs. The state appropriation was not meant for a continuing state-funded program for the gifted, he said.

"I agree that it (gifted education) is an important program," Atiyeh said. "But it becomes almost like what the federal government did with the handicapped — made a promise (of funds) that can't be delivered."

STATE FUNDING FOR GIFTED STUDENTS IN 1977-78

TOP 14 STATES	(IN MILLIONS)*
PENNSYLVANIA	$ 20
FLORIDA	13.9
CALIFORNIA	13.4
N. CAROLINA	8.5
VIRGINIA	7.6
GEORGIA	6
TENNESEE	3.3
CONNECTICUT	3.3
ILLINOIS	2.6
ALABAMA	2.5
MISSOURI	1.09
IDAHO	1.05
MARYLAND	1.05
OREGON	1.00

*FIGURES FROM THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

While many school officials agree that state funds should be used as seed money to encourage locally funded programs, they argue that the seeds have to be planted long enough to show some results.

In the Seaside School District, counselor Lou Ann Riggan remembers the time when her district would put up only $500 for gifted students. Using volunteer help, she put together some semblance of a program, but passed over a number of gifted children.

But last fall, the district received a $7,500 grant from the state and the school board agreed to match it with another $7,500.

The money has been used to provide individualized education programs for 33 gifted elementary students, including one first grader who has been reading since he was 2 years old and has a mental age of 14.

"I couldn't do it without the state funds," Ms. Riggan said. "Without the money, little school districts like ours would just be dead."

In the sprawling Portland School District, more than 1,000 gifted students are getting enriched instruction in special programs set up with the help of $380,000 in state aid.

The programs include efforts to identify gifted minority students who have traditionally been overlooked because of culturally biased tests.

"If the governor's budget flies, we'll have at best half as much state aid as we're now getting," predicted Edwin Schneider, assistant superintendent. "We'd have to serve substantially fewer students or reduce the programs that any one student gets."

School Bias Charges Probed

The Portland School District is being investigated by federal civil rights officials for alleged discrimination against its 7,942 black students and black staff.

In action stemming from a 2-year-old complaint, investigators from the federal Office of Civil Rights in Seattle completed Friday an on-site probe into alleged discrimination in seven areas.

The areas include the hiring and assignment of black teachers, the hiring of other black professionals and non-professional staff, disciplining of black students, differences in academic achievement levels of black and white students and excessive busing of black students compared to busing of white students.

In a complaint filed in 1977, the Oregon Minority Educators Organization, which includes black teachers from the city system, alleges that the school district's actions in those areas violate provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The provisions prohibit racial discrimination in federally funded programs.

School Superintendent Robert Blanchard said Friday that the complaint was "without merit at the time it was made" and is still without merit. "We feel that we're on very solid ground," he said.

Federal officials were not available for comment.

In their five-day probe, a team of investigators interviewed central administrators, area administrators and principals and teachers at more than a dozen Portland schools.

Elementary schools included in the probe were Irvington, King, Woodlawn, Sabin, Boise, Humboldt, Ainsworth, Chapman, Whitman, Mount Tabor, Gregory Heights and Multnomah.

Middle schools investigated were Columbia-Whitaker, Sellwood, Portsmouth and Markham. At the high school level, investigators visited Jefferson, Washington-Monroe and Marshall.

Specifics about the alleged discrimination were not made available by federal officials.

But Portland teacher aide Vesia Loving, who filed a companion complaint last Jan. 25 which apparently launched the current investigation, said her complaint charges the district with racial discrimination in the way it conducts its busing program for desegregation.

Black students are forced to be bused out of their neighborhood schools, while white students may voluntarily choose to attend early childhood education centers in the black community, she said.

Mrs. Loving, a black aide at Boise School, said she filed the complaint after Blanchard rejected a so-called "school pairing" plan drawn up by a citizen group to remedy the situation.

"When he (Blanchard) threw it out, I got mad enough to file a complaint," Mrs. Loving said.

Blanchard said a greater proportion of black students, compared to white students, chose to take part in the district's voluntary busing for desegregation. But he said forced busing was equally shared by blacks and whites.

"If the issue is the number of students who can't attend their neighborhood schools, then I believe the evidence will demonstrate that the number is about proportional," Blanchard said.

On other issues, Blanchard said the district had passed earlier federal tests of its teacher placement practices and student discipline procedures.

The federal government held up the district's desegregation funding because of alleged discrimination in both areas, but the district recovered the money when it submitted compliance plans.

In a memorandum to school officials, federal investigators said they would complete their current probe by May 11.

Second in a Series

APRIL 16, 1979

Gifted Students 'Drop Out' At Frighteningly High Rate

It used to be that if a gifted student finished memorizing the names of all the U.S. presidents, he was given another chore — memorizing the names of all the vice presidents.

Today, that approach to educating gifted children has all but disappeared along with other dinosaurs of pedagogic practice.

In its place is a belief that what gifted students need is not just "more of the same," but supplemental programs which offer something different from the traditional classroom fare.

THINK — Teacher John Hackman teaches students like Dawn Erwin, 10, how to solve problems by the scientific method in his resource center for gifted students at the Henry Elementary School in Philadelphia.

Staff photos by JIM VINCENT

POKE — Suzanne Whithed (left) and Joanna Kui get hands-on experience in independent projects in class for the gifted at the Henry Elementary School.

"An appropriate education is the basic right of every child," said Joseph Renzulli, an education professor at the University of Connecticut and one of the nation's leading theorists on gifted education.

"Gifted students need special programs to fully develop their potential," Renzulli said. "A lot of able people drop out of school — and a lot more drop out psychologically."

One study has found that more than 80,000 intellectually gifted students drop out of the nation's high schools every year. In Iowa, an estimated 17 percent of the state's high school dropouts are gifted students.

While critics of special programs for the gifted point to the achievements of men like Albert Einstein despite educational obstacles, advocates say Einstein was the exception, not the rule.

"We are increasingly being stripped of the comfortable notion that a bright mind will make its own way," said former U.S. Commissioner of Education Samuel P. Marland in a landmark report to Congress in 1971.

"On the contrary," Marland said, "intellectual and creative talent cannot survive educational neglect and apathy."

To insure that gifted students receive an appropriate education, 14 states — including Idaho and Alaska in the West — require public schools to offer special services for the gifted.

In many of the states, the services are required along with special services for physically and mentally handicapped students.

Across the country, the special services for the gifted take dozens of different forms. They include independent study, mentorships in the community, minicourses, tutorials, seminars, advanced placement and acceleration beyond grade level.

But most are aimed at giving students skills — not packages of facts — to become independent learners:

— In Sarasota, Fla., 17-year-old Thomas Sheppard, a gifted student at the Pine View School, has spent much of his senior year at the local hospital.

As part of the school's professional experience program, Sheppard has worked in radiology, pathology, family practice, surgery and the emergency room.

"I don't go in and clean up the mess," Sheppard said. "I do what the doctor does. If he listens to the stethoscope, I listen to the stethoscope."

— In New Haven, Conn., Jon Beamon spends half a day four days a week studying sculpture at the Educational Center for the Arts in a downtown synagogue which has been converted into a regional program for artistically talented youth.

Last year, Beamon flunked an art class at nearby Hamden High School because he refused to follow the cookie cutter patterns outlined by his drawing teacher.

At the arts center, Beamon receives instruction from actual artists. "He's one of the most talented kids we've ever had come through here," said his teacher

— In Philadelphia, teacher John Hackman runs a resource room for gifted students at the Henry Elementary School. To all appearances, it's a 12-ring circus

Some students are busy weighing rocks, others are measuring plant growth and some are scrutinizing soil samples. In one corner, two students are discussing "Zabits," the creatures they will create to colonize comets.

"All the kids are doing projects which involve variable testing," Hackman said. "What they are learning is how to think like scientists."

At a time when the "back-to-basics" mentality has begun to strip public schools of anything but a bare bones curriculum, some view special programs for the gifted as a way of retaining the excitement and joy of learning.

"Gifted education is the vehicle to institute the idea of excellence that we've lost," said Dorothy Sisk, director of the federal Office of Gifted and Talented.

How the grab bag of educational goodies is to be delivered, however, is an open — and controversial — question with far-reaching consequences for school systems and the nation as a whole.

Should gifted students be completely separated from average students? Should they be separated only some of the time? Or should they be separated at all?

Third in a Series

APRIL 17, 1978

Florida School Illustrates Conflict In Serving Gifted

SARASOTA, Fla. — Fifteen-year-old Tracey Gallagher sat cross-legged and barefoot in the noon sun, poring over her 2-inch-thick U.S. history book.

"At what other school could I sit on a deck and read advanced placement history without getting odd looks?" she asked.

Tracey is one of 470 students at the Pine View School, which functions as the gifted education program for public schools throughout Sarasota County on Florida's Gulf coast and represents one pole of the national debate over how gifted students are best served.

At the school, which runs from grades 4 through 12, the students are separated from students with average intelligence and placed in their own school all day every day.

Some students, like senior Jonathan Webb, have never been enrolled full-time in a regular public school except for the early elementary grades.

"I've gotten a lot out of it," said Webb, 17, who's headed for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology next fall. "You couldn't equal the math background here anywhere in the county.

"Regular public schools emphasize memorization and rote learning. Here, they teach you to think."

Opened 10 years ago with federal funding, Pine View occupies more than 20 wood-frame portable buildings nestled among pine trees in a quiet residential neighborhood.

The portables include the "Henry David Thoreau," the "Mark Twain" and — for the mathematically astute — "Dunford's Domain."

On their breaks, the students lounge in the sun, toss Frisbees and wander quietly around the grounds. The biggest disciplinary problem at the school is pine-cone fights.

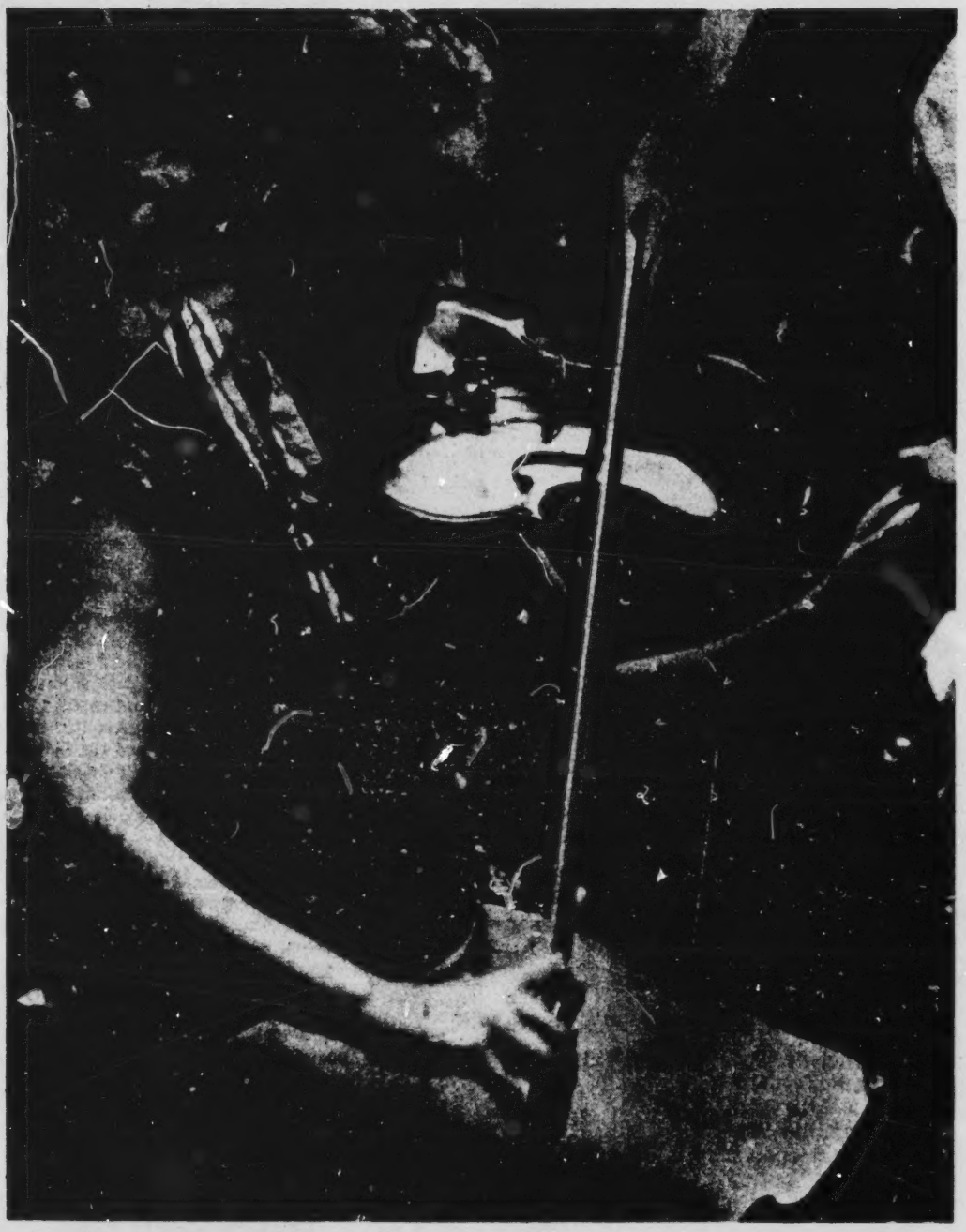
To the uninitiated, the school might be mistaken for a summer camp.

Under Florida state law, gifted students are classified along with the handicapped as "exceptional children" for whom school districts are required to provide appropriate educations to meet their special needs.

The law, in effect, also defines a gifted child as one with an IQ of at least 130.

Pine View draws its student body from the 24,270-student Sarasota County public school system. Most of the students ride the bus to school, with some traveling more than 20 miles.

TALENT — The talent at Pine View School isn't limited to mathematical pursuits. Students like Toni Fukunaka, 13, also have artistic talent.



ELITIST ?—Sarasota's Pine View School is a public school open only to gifted students. But students say the school helps them develop their potential without ridicule from other students.

The students are initially spotted for screening through group IQ and achievement tests given at the third-grade level in their home schools.

To get into Pine View, they take another battery of tests — sometimes as many as a dozen different exams or inventories — but the main entrance requirement is a score of at least 130 on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.

Once admitted to the school, the students are supposed to maintain at least a B average if they are to stay.

Pine View's curriculum isn't much different from most traditional schools, but teachers say that they cover subjects in more breadth and depth than they could in regular classrooms.

The science curriculum, for instance, includes a course in the history and philosophy of science in which students debate everything from theoretical physics to the ethical questions involved in the exploration of outer space.

The school also offers students a program in which they can get credit for working alongside professionals in the community.

"I once had 14 kids working at the physiology lab at Sarasota Memorial Hospital," said biology teacher Solomon Malinsky.

Not surprisingly, student achievement at Pine View is high. Last year, the school produced 13 National Merit semifinalists, representing nearly one-third of the junior class.

A large percentage of its graduates go on to Ivy League colleges, but the school also fosters some free spirits with their own ideas about higher education. One senior, for instance, said he plans to live in a tree house next year rather than go to college.

The main controversy which swirls around the school centers on its very existence. Is a separate public school for gifted children elitist? Does it foster snobbery?

Does it deny average intelligence children the opportunity to interact with intellectually gifted children? Does it prepare students for life in the "real world?"

"Initially, I was really skeptical of segregating the kids," said Susan Niederpruem, chairman of the Pine View math department. "But I've changed my mind over the years as I've watched what happens to kids socially.

"If you are smart, you are often socially segregated in a regular public school. Here at Pine View, you can be a cheer leader and still be smart."

Dot Bowman, the mother of two children who have attended Pine View, said her daughter was ridiculed for making good grades in a regular public school. "When you go to a regular school, you have to give up your giftedness to fit in," she said.

Pine View Principal John Woolever, a marine biologist by training, has spent much of the past 10 years defending the school.

"We are not a small, isolated ivory tower here," said Woolever. "In the district schools, the students are restricted to march, eat and drink with their own grade level."

Woolever said the school, adjacent to several other regular public schools, encourages its students to take band, driver's education and other courses at the regular schools.

He conceded, however, that Pine View students are often so stigmatized by students at the regular schools that they are made to feel unwelcome.

"We've had kids come back from the high school in tears and vow never to go back there again," Woolever admitted.

At nearby Sarasota Junior High School, student attitudes about Pine View students are largely negative.

"They think they're all geniuses," said one ninth grader. "You go to their school and they are all laid back reading books for fun."

Said another student, "A lot of the Pine View kids think they're too good for us. They come over here and cut everybody down."

The students admitted, however, that they had never themselves visited Pine View.

For their part, Pine View students believe they are unfairly stereotyped by the other students. "They make fun of us just like they make fun of retarded kids," said a Pine View senior.

One Pine View mother said that the school was the object of "reverse discrimination." When her daughter was first admitted to the school, she recalled, the mother of her daughter's friend refused to let the children play together.

"In the first year, Diane (her best friend) and I would meet on the corner because her mother wouldn't let her come into my yard," recalled Kim Codol, now a Pine View seventh-grader who plans to attend a regular high school rather than continue at Pine View.

Kim said she wanted to transfer not because of the stigma attached to Pine View but because she found the school's social life too limiting.

"We're so small that we don't have proms and football games," she said. "We don't have the little things that you remember. You may not remember the A you got on your English paper, but you do remember a prom."

Some factions in the community make no secret of the fact that they disagree with the approach to gifted education that Pine View represents. Addison Gilbert, a principal at the largely black Booker-Bayhaven magnet program in the Sarasota schools, is one of Pine View's sharpest critics.

"Pine View, in essence, is a center for de facto segregation and for those people concerned with snob appeal," Gilbert said.

About 12 percent of the county's school children are ethnic minorities, most of them black. But at Pine View, there was only one black student enrolled last year.

A junior, she was the only Pine View student to flunk Florida's new competency tests required for high school graduation.

This year, black enrollment at Pine View is up to "three or four" students, according to Woolever. He claimed that blacks were "their own worst enemy" in that many with high IQs simply weren't interested in attending Pine View.

Although IQ tests, including the Wechsler scale, have come under attack for being racially biased, Woolever defended their use with minority students.

"They (minorities) have been exposed to the same schools, they read the same newspapers and they speak the same language," he said. "They are as much a part of this culture as I am."

Other members of the school staff — as well as some students — would like to see the school undertake an affirmative action program to recruit black students and work with them to improve their test scores so they can qualify for admission to the school.

The effort is needed as much for the benefit of the largely white, middle-class Pine View students as it is for minority youth, they believe. "A lot of our kids are great with words, but they sure aren't street wise," said one Pine View teacher.

Fourth in a Series

APRIL 18, 1979

Beaverton Approach Gets Mixed Reviews

BEAVERTON — Two months ago, "bacteriology" was just a word in a dictionary to 12-year-old Anne Marie Giard. She stumbled across it when she was looking up the meaning of another word.

But today, Anne Marie, a student at Beaverton's Sunset Valley Elementary School, spends two afternoons a week studying bacteriology with a volunteer mentor in a laboratory at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

"To me, it's like detective work," said Mrs. Lawrence Biggs, a Beaverton housewife and former medical technologist who shares her expertise with Anne Marie over petri dishes and microscopes. "I hope to be able to transmit some of that enthusiasm to children."

The mentorship program is one component of the Beaverton School District's effort to serve gifted students. The program, which has won high regard around the state, is an example of the so-called "part-time, pullout" approach to serving gifted students.

Under the program, gifted students are pulled out of regular classrooms and spend part of their school time working with other gifted students or in special

programs such as community mentorships.

The approach, which is the most common tack taken by programs for the gifted around the country, represents a middle ground between separating gifted students from average students full time or not separating them at all.

"As a group, gifted students learn faster, better and make more complex connections than average students," said Marsha Correll Rhodes, Beaverton's specialist for gifted education.

"It's not reasonable to expect the regular classroom teacher to be able to meet all the needs of gifted students in addition to reaching the average, the below-average and the above-average," she said.

At the same time, however, she said that separating gifted students from others on a full-time basis would create elitism and remove classroom teachers from any responsibility for the gifted.

Under Beaverton's part-time pullout approach, some 350 gifted students in grades 4 through 9 spend about 20 percent of their time outside regular classrooms.

The students, who are intellectually gifted, have been selected from among the district's 20,530 students on the basis of group IQ tests, achievement tests and teacher recommendations.

Outside the classroom, the students may work on a one-to-one basis with a community mentor, take part in special classes for the gifted in school buildings or participate in activities at the district's resource center for the gifted.

Price tag for the program, which gets $67,000 in state funds, is $290,989, one of the highest per pupil spending rates for gifted students in the state.

As part of the mentorship program, Allison Wegner, a fifth grader at Oak Hill Elementary School, has visited a local mental health clinic to do research on emotionally disturbed children.

"I interviewed some of the counselors," Allison said. "They told me that you can be born with emotional disturbances."

Based on her own research, however, Allison thinks that environmental factors — including home life — also play a big role. "We should make counseling help easier for parents to get," she said. "That way they wouldn't take all their problems out on their kids."

At Highland Park Junior High School, teacher Dave Moore works with 16 gifted students for one period a day. Each of the students is required to pursue an independent study project.

"We want the kids to actually produce something with what they know," Moore said. "It doesn't have to be a paper. It could be a game, a computer program or a landscape design."

Phyllis Gerstenfeld, 12, the only girl in the class, has designed a game about religions as one of her independent projects.

"Religions just aren't thrown together," Phyllis explained. "They all have certain things like gods, symbols and religious leaders."

In designing her game, Phyllis made up seven different kinds of religions, each with its own coherent system.

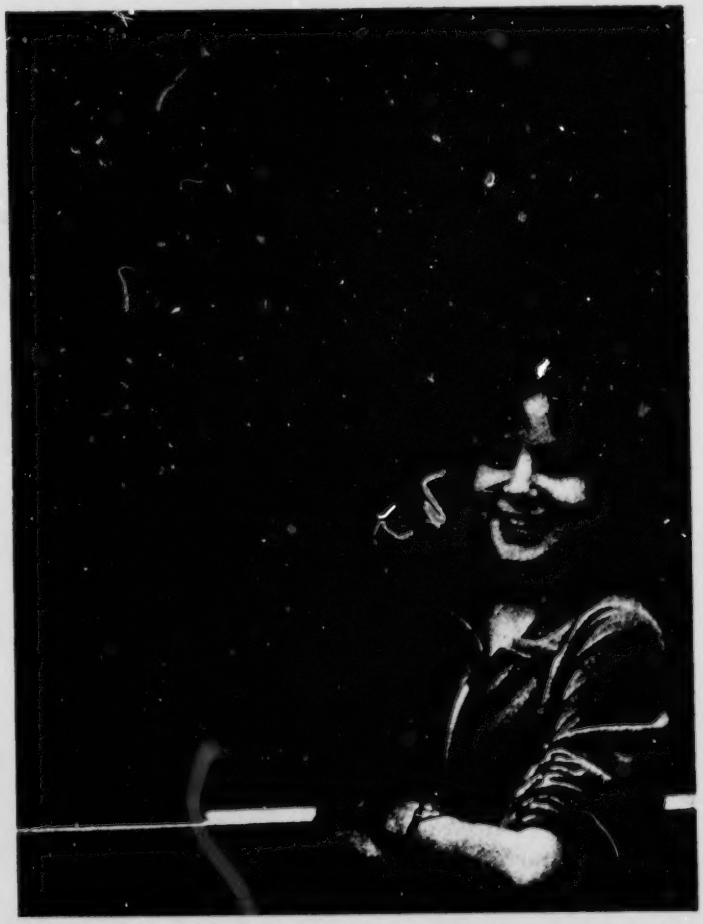
"I learned it's not easy to create a game," she said. "I had to make up seven complete sets of cards that made sense, put the rules down in the right order and use math to design the board."

To serve gifted students throughout the district, the Beaverton program also operates a resource center for the gifted at the Five Oaks Intermediate School.

The state-funded center conducts a variety of activities ranging from teacher training to enrichment classes for gifted students. Every Monday afternoon, Chuck Haymond, an electrical engineer at Tektronix Inc. offers a computer class for elementary students.

Himself a precocious student who turned off school because he was bored, Haymond, 28, said he hopes his class will stimulate students before they lose interest in school. "If I'd had computer programming at such a young age I would have developed a better attitude," he said.

"It's really neat," said Scott Freck, 10, of the computer class. "You can program the computer so you can play



WIZ — Phyllis Gerstenfeld, 12, of Highland Park Junior High School, in Beaverton district, is the only girl in the school's program for gifted students. "But I don't mind," she said.

these games. We talk to it in basic computer language."

Not all students, however, are so enamored of the school district's gifted education program. A number of students who have been identified as gifted have chosen not to take part in the program.

Others, like eighth grader Tim Steinert of Meadow Park Junior High School, have dropped out of the program. "My TAG (talented and gifted) class last year meant so little to me that I can hardly remember what we did," he said.

"We tried to figure out mysteries," Steinert said. "Like how you could grow something in the Oregon caves. But one thing didn't lead to another."

He added, "It will take the Beaverton school system a while to get the TAG program operating. But once they do, I think it will work."

Fifth in a Series

APRIL 19, 1979

'Aesthetics' Concept Embraces All Students As Gifted

MONTCLAIR, N.J. — The 6,000-student Montclair School District has three magnet schools for gifted and talented students. But the schools, which teach everything from Mandarin Chinese to urban design, are open to any student who's interested in attending, regardless of ability.

"We have little patience with the idea that gifted and talented students make up only 3 percent to 5 percent of the population," explained Arnold Goldberg, who coordinates the district's gifted education program.

"We have even less patience with the idea that IQ tests are the only measure of giftedness," he said. "That's elitist, discriminatory and, quite frankly, it's racist."

At the heart of Montclair's maverick program is the belief that all children have gifts and talents, and that the purpose of education ought to be to nurture those gifts.

The magnet schools have no entrance requirements and no screening to see who's "gifted" and who isn't. The assumption is that all students have potential which is worth developing.

Only 2 years old, the Montclair program has emerged as the new kid on the block in gifted education across the country. And it has the traditionalists squirming.

They accuse Montclair of "bastardizing" the gifted education movement by opening it up to everybody.

"To say that every child is gifted is like saying that every child has athletic ability," said one nationally recognized expert. "Sure they do, but some more than others."

Despite such caveats, the Montclair approach is catching on in a number of other New Jersey communities. It's also aroused the interest of school systems outside the state.

Located 30 miles from Manhattan, Montclair is a commuter community of 45,000 which has enjoyed a reputation for its excellent — if sometimes controversial — public schools.

The socio-economic mix in the community ranges from old industrial wealth to poor blacks, and the schools reflect the two extremes.

"In one class, you've got a kid whose problem is knowing when the swimming pool will be ready for use," said one school official. "He'll be sitting next to a kid whose problem is, will there be enough for dinner tonight?"

With a minority enrollment of 43 percent, most of it black, Montclair schools have been embroiled for more than a decade in public controversy over how best to desegregate.

Until recently, the district used forced busing to meet a state order for racial balance in every school.

But two years ago, Superintendent Walter Marks took what he called his "traveling road show" into dozens of community living rooms to sell the public on a system of magnet schools for voluntary desegregation.

"We started with one question," Marks said. "If you could design the best elementary school system you could, what would you put into it?"

From the black community, Marks heard the call for back-to-basics. From much of the white community came a plea for gifted and talented education.

To accommodate both needs, the school district shelved its forced busing plan, opened up a fundamental magnet school in the heart of the white community and three gifted and talented magnet schools in the heart of the black community.

The hope was that blacks would be attracted into the white majority schools, and that whites would be attracted into the black majority schools.

To the surprise of many, including local civil rights groups, the plan worked. Today, the minority enrollment in every school in the district is within 2 percent of the districtwide average. "God," said Marks, "was on our side."

Not incidentally, the federal government also was on Montclair's side. It agreed to pump nearly half a million dollars a year into the school district to foot the bill for the experimental approach to desegregation.

The money, along with an annual $400,000 in local funds, is what keeps the district's gifted and talented program operating.

Under the program, there are three schools designated as gifted and talented magnets. One is an early childhood education center, another is an elementary school for grades 3 through 5 and another is a middle school.

What's different about the schools is the wide variety of electives they offer. The electives, which the district calls "aesthetics," constitute the magnet for gifted and talented education.

There are more than 200 aesthetic courses offered, ranging from logic to super stars, a study of sports figures. Typically, students spend about half their day in basic subjects such as reading and math, and the other half in aesthetic courses.

The schools also have what the district calls "creative I" courses which are open only to selected students based on teacher recommendations and student performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, an achievement test.

The presence of the creative I classes has led some to charge that Montclair is actually operating an elitist program within what appears to be an egalitarian model. But school officials dispute the charge.

"Creative I isn't elitist because the entry requirements aren't that strict," said Goldberg. "We only use the Iowa to spot kids who just couldn't make it in certain classes. A kid who ranks in the 30th percentile in math, for instance, wouldn't be accepted into an accelerated math class."

At Hillside School, which includes grades 3 through 5, the aesthetics run the gamut from architecture to creative dramatics. For two periods every week, teacher Carl Porte, a former nature study director for the Boy Scouts, offers students a course in reptile study.

His classroom includes a giant terrarium and small pond where students

Staff photos by JIM VINCENT

CHOICE—Montclair's gifted and talented program features 200 elective courses including reptile study.

like 8-year-old Chris Hodges can have a hands-on experience with a wide variety of reptiles including turtles, iguanas, salamanders, snakes and toads.

"I'd never seen a salamander before I came to this class," said Chris, a third-grader, as he carefully examined the creature and recorded his observations of its skin, eyes and feet.

"We have kids with extremely high IQs and kids who can't write their own names," said Porte. "But once they are in here, they are all really turned on. When they leave, I'd like to think they are going on to bigger and better things."

Since the aesthetics program began, achievement test scores of Hillside students have soared. They are now the highest of any school in the district and school officials credit much of the gain to the presence of the gifted and talented magnet.

School Principal Deborah Hart, former president of the New Jersey state chapter of the National Organization for Women, likes to say that the school has gotten away from what she calls the "medical metaphor" in education.

"We focus not on the child's problems, but on the child's possibilities," she said.

Parents, both black and white, agree. Audrey Fletcher, a black mother of a fourth-grade boy who has had trouble reading, has watched her son blossom at the school.

"He's very dramatic," Mrs. Fletcher said. "He can be a real clown. The school has developed that as a gift and talent, and it has sparked his academic work."

Staci Godfrey, the mother of two, is a white parent who has chosen to send her sons to the gifted and talented magnet programs rather than to their neighborhood school.

Herself a graduate of the famed Little Red School House, a progressive private school in New York's Greenwich Village, Ms. Godfrey said the academic pressure at the school made her grow to hate school.

"My theology on school is that, more than anything else, I just wanted my kids to like it," she said. "For the first time, they are getting up in the morning and happily going off to class."

Despite a planning period of more than a year, the Montclair magnet program brought about major changes relatively rapidly. Some, such as the district's teachers, contend they didn't have enough say in how it all happened.

The changes have spurred a number of grievances from the local teacher union.

Some students, also, aren't too happy with the aesthetics courses. "I would take the aesthetics and throw them in the garbage," said Jennifer Lubkin, an

eighth-grader at Glenfield School.

She and other students said some of the classes weren't all they were cracked up to be. A videotape course, for instance, which promised students the chance to do taping in jails and other community facilities, actually left them sitting in a classroom all day.

Theodore Gorley, New Jersey's state coordinator for gifted education, said he had mixed views of the Montclair program.

"It's a terrific concept to say that every child could be gifted," he said. "It's also terrific to say that the way you get into a gifted program is by demonstrated performance."

But Gorley added, "The problem is that you may not really be identifying kids who are truly gifted and need something else."

Sixth in a Series

APRIL 20, 1979

Five-State Talent Search Yields Accelerated Class

BALTIMORE — Go to school on Sunday? For eight mathematically talented teen-agers, it's the biggest bonanza of the week.

The students, aged 12 to 15, take a college calculus class every Sunday afternoon at the Johns Hopkins University.

"It beats staying home and watching TV," explained 14-year-old Peter Monta whose parents drive him all the way from his home in Pittsburgh so he can take the class.

Lily Rin, 12, of Elkton, Md., is the only girl in the class. But she likes the challenges that it poses. "I study math a lot on my own," she said. "My regular classes tend to bore me."

The students are part of the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth, a nationally touted program begun at Johns Hopkins eight years ago to tap the talent of mathematically gifted students.

The driving force behind the program is 60-year-old psychology professor Julian Stanley, a soft-spoken Georgian who is the nation's leading proponent of academic acceleration.

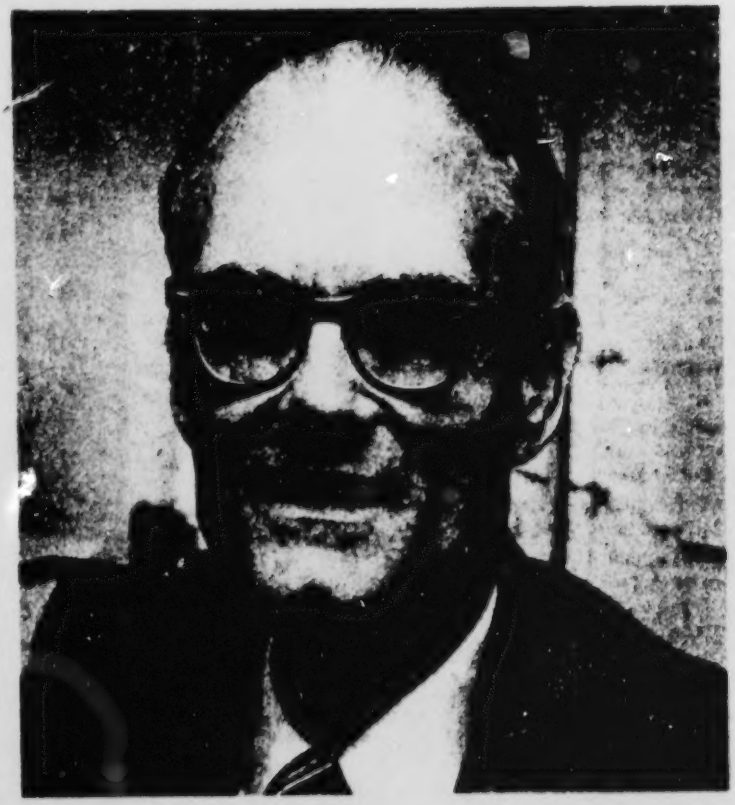
Most commonly, acceleration means skipping grades. But it can also mean starting school early or gaining advanced placement into a college.

"A very large percent of the math talent in this country goes down the drain because of the slow pace of most math classes," said Stanley, who characterized himself as a "bored student" who graduated from a small Georgia college at age 19.

To avoid boredom — and the loss of precious talent — Stanley advocates moving students ahead according to their ability.

He believes that acceleration is best done when the student can transfer from one school to another — such as the natural transition point between elementary school and junior high school — or through advanced placement in college classes.

Typically, the students who come out of Stanley's summer mathematics program are able to enter college with sophomore standing.



FAST PACE — Psychology professor Julian Stanley of the Johns Hopkins University contends it's more emotionally damaging to keep many gifted students with their peers than to allow them to accelerate past their grade level.

"The goal is to give them more time for really productive work," he said.

What about potential emotional damage? "It's more emotionally damaging not to move the student," Stanley replied. "They end up bored and alienated."

He added, "There's never been a substantive study done that's shown acceleration injurious if the child is able and motivated."

Under the precocious youth program, Stanley conducts an annual mathematics talent search among the seventh-grade students from five states — Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania — and Washington, D.C.

To qualify for the search, students must score in the top 3 percent on a nationally standardized math achievement test.

The students are then given the Scholastic Aptitude Test which is nor-

mally given to college-bound high school students.

Those who score at the very top — at least 550 in math on a scale running from 200 to 800 — are eligible to take part in the fast-paced classes at Johns Hopkins, including a special summer session.

In last summer's class, Stanley claims to have taken a dozen students through a pre-calculus class in just 48 hours.

Since its inception, Stanley's program has steadily expanded. It began with 450 students who were tested as part of the original talent search. Last January, the program tested more than 3,800 students.

Next year, the program will expand to include students who are verbally gifted and it will add another state — New Jersey — to those participating in the talent search.

Elsewhere, Illinois, inspired by Stanley's model, has embarked on its own statewide math talent search, and other jurisdictions are following suit.

Stanley's most celebrated student is Eric Jablow who entered Brooklyn College from the sixth-grade and became the youngest graduate in the history of the New York City system of higher education.

At 17, Jablow is currently a second-year doctoral candidate at Princeton University.

About 10 percent of Stanley's proteges gain early admittance to Johns Hopkins where the rolls include a 13-year-old Stanley understudy who has sophomore standing.

"He's one we really have to protect," Stanley said. He refused to permit an interview with the boy for fear that he would be hounded by reporters.

Stanley concedes that acceleration hasn't been successful in all cases.

"We've had two who dropped out of Hopkins," he said, "but they had a long history of problems. The problems would have been worse, however, had they stayed in regular programs."

While controversial, Stanley's approach has won the support of some of the leading experts in gifted education.

"The evidence on acceleration is outrageously positive unless you do it in a stupid or mechanical way," said James Gallagher, a child psychologist and director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "It's a tool that ought to be used whenever appropriate."

He noted that most doctors are at least 30 years old before they complete their medical training and engage in productive work. "If we can cut some time off that, then we ought to do so," Gallagher said.

But another expert, William Vassar, state consultant for gifted education in Connecticut, said he favored acceleration only after a complete case study had been done on the student.

Even then, he said, the student should be accelerated in specific academic areas, not in all subjects.

"I still think a 15-year-old at Johns Hopkins should be able to go home and play Pop Warner football if he wants to," Vassar said.

'Severely gifted' Youth Skips High School Boredom

SARASOTA, Fla. — Gregory Dubois didn't just skip a grade. He skipped all of high school.

At 13, he's a typical-looking American boy who wears T-shirts and tennis shoes, but Gregory is also a college sophomore at New College, a small, experimental college on the shores of Sarasota Bay.

"He would have been bored by high school," said Gregory's mother, Christiane Felsmann, who sent her son to New College after he finished the eighth-grade at Sarasota's Pine View School for gifted children.

Two years into his college studies, Gregory himself approves of the decision.

"I wanted a real challenge," he said. "New College has been a real challenge. It turned out right."

Gregory is one of a tiny minority of children who are sometimes considered "severely gifted." On various intelligence tests, his IQ has ranged between 169 and more than 200.

Born to Mrs. Felsmann when she was 44 years old, Gregory began reading at age 2½. To challenge her son, Mrs. Felsmann used to put labels on all the pieces of furniture in their Manhattan apartment.

As a toddler, Gregory learned to read the labels. "When I switched them," his mother recalled, "he had a ball putting them back in the right places."

At age 3, Gregory wasn't just reading labels. He was reading a book on matter. "He was into that book constantly," Mrs. Felsmann said. "He was fascinated by it."

Like other extremely bright children, Gregory's experience in schools can be summed up in one word — boredom.

In search of a challenge for her son, Mrs. Felsmann enrolled him in some of the best schools in the country, from a fashionable French nursery school in New York City to a private boys school in Greenwich, Conn.

"It was an utter disaster," Mrs. Felsmann said. "He was so bored."

Even at Sarasota's Pine View School, which enrolls only intellectually gifted children, Gregory couldn't find the stimulation he wanted.

"I understand that I created quite a nuisance when I was in the fourth-grade at Pine View," he said. "I was accused of acting childish in class. I have a good idea why that was. I was bored."

At New College, Gregory takes a full schedule of classes including German, Latin, multivariable calculus and medieval philosophy and religious thought.

Academically, his interests center on physics and mathematics, and he sometimes takes one of the school's oscilloscopes home for the weekend to play with.

Outside of class, he takes organ and piano lessons at his home in a Sarasota highrise where he lives with his mother. He's also learning how to play tennis and hopes to join the college tennis team.

At New College, Gregory says he's happier than he ever has been and he has more friends. As to the idea that he might be emotionally damaged by skipping so far ahead, Gregory calls it "hogwash."

He added, "I didn't have any trouble relating to people older than I was."

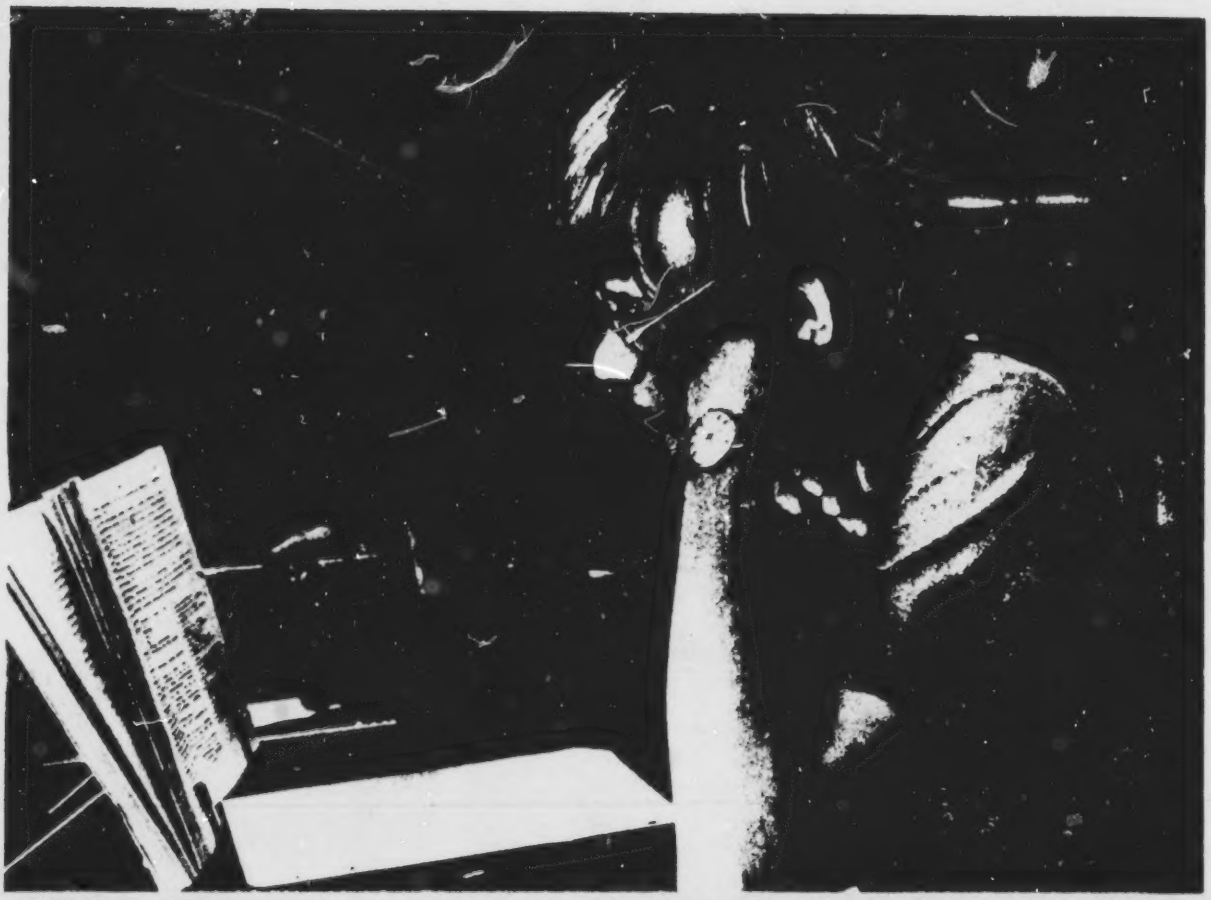
His mother agrees. "He is utterly accepted there," she said. "For the first time, he doesn't feel isolated. It's nice."

Gregory hasn't settled on a definite career goal, but he believes he will end up in the sciences. And he admits to having "a lot of opinions" about some heated scientific topics.

One is solar energy. "I think it's very stupid that the United States isn't putting more effort into research on solar energy," he said.

"We are using up too many resources and we're not working on the right alternatives. If the government won't work on the research, other people will have to."

Gregory added, "Someday I might want to design a better solar cell, one



HEAVY LOAD — Gregory Dubois, 13, takes full class load, including medieval philosophy and reli_ious thought, as he completes his sopho more year in college. He is thinking of getting a high school diploma "just for bookkeeping purposes" when he goes job hunting.

that directly converts sunlight to electricity for mass use. But I'd better put my knowledge to use when I have more."

In retrospect, Gregory doesn't have any regrets about skipping high school. But looking at the job market, he's beginning to get concerned about not having a high school diploma in his possession.

"It could be kind of inconvenient not to have a diploma," he said. "I'm concerned that it might mess up some computer when I go to look for a job. So I'm thinking of getting one just for bookkeeping purposes."

Seventh in a Series

APRIL 21, 1979

Gifted Girls Face Stereotyping, Often Limiting Scholastic Goals

"If a female Einstein existed in the United States today, would she recognized? Would she be a professor at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies? Would she get a National Science Foundation grant? Would she be listed in 'Who's Who?' Or would she be found in a neat suburban house washing her husband's socks, practicing Craig Claiborne recipes and imbibing dry martinis in the afternoon with anger mounting in her heart toward her family, her friends and the faculty at the college where she majored in physics?" — Ruth B. Kundsin, "Women and Success: The Anatomy of Achievement."

BALTIMORE — Seventeen-year-old Kate Sugarman is young, gifted and female.

Three years ago as an entering freshman at the previously all-male Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, Kate earned the highest grade point average in her class.

The achievement rated Page One play in The Baltimore Sun.

But at school, Kate took some ribbing from her mostly male classmates. "There goes old 96.8," they joked.

For Kate Sugarman, and other gifted girls like her, excellence isn't always rewarded. That's especially true for girls who excel in the male-dominated fields of the hard sciences and mathematics.

Just how far educators have to go to remove the barriers to gifted girls may be judged by the results of a 1960 survey of 450,000 high school students throughout the country.

Under Project Talent, the students spent two days taking various achievement and aptitude tests. The students were then followed up to determine their educational and vocational choices.

For the girls, the results were surprising. Five years out of high school, one-fourth of the gifted female students were employed as secretaries and typists.

But at Johns Hopkins University, which conducts an annual talent search for mathematically gifted youth, an effort has begun to help mathematically precocious girls overcome the barriers to success.

The effort is part of the Intellectually Gifted Child Study Group set up in 1974 as a spinoff of the university's talent search among mathematically able seventh-graders from a six-state area.

"After the first talent search, we discovered that 19 percent of the boys scored higher than the highest scoring girl on the mathematics section of the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)," said study group coordinator Lynn Fox, 35, a former junior high school math teacher from Orlando, Fla.

"At that point, we said, hey, we have a sex difference problem here," she said.

Over the past four years, study group researchers have found that the problem is rooted not so much in biology as in social conditioning and sex-role stereotyping.

While girls are typically well represented in the top math groups in elementary school, their ranks tend to thin out as they advance through high school.

Even among the most mathematically able girls, relatively few, compared to boys, choose to pursue a career which draws upon their mathematical talent.

Why the gap?

"The incredible persistence of a myth that doesn't seem to be accurate," Ms. Fox replied. "The myth that intellectually gifted females are sexually and socially unappealing."

Because of conditioning, gifted girls impose the myth on themselves, as well as getting it from others, Ms. Fox said.

Staff photos by
JIM VINCENT

BRIGHT — Lynn Fox, right, professor at Johns Hopkins University, believes social conditioning stops females from considering math careers. Kate Sugarman, below, was among the first girls in all-male Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.

"The girls have the idea that if you come off being too intellectual, you won't have any girlfriends, you won't have any boyfriends and the teachers won't like you, either," she said. "And to some extent, that's true."

When they are called upon in class, gifted girls are often placed in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" position, Ms. Fox said.

"If you volunteer to answer a question and you're wrong, then you're stupid," she said. "If you volunteer an answer and you're right, then you won't be accepted. So many girls take the position that it's better to remain silent."

Such self-imposed limits are reinforced by teachers and counselors who are just as caught up in sex-role stereotyping as the girls themselves, Ms. Fox said.

"If you have a college-bound boy," she said, "you are probably going to counsel him to take four years of

science and math. But if you have a college-bound girl, you counsel her into four years of English. In fact, a lot of counselors warn the girls that science and math classes will only ruin their GPA."

Over the past four years, the study group has been working with gifted girls themselves as well as school systems in the Baltimore area to discover effective models to break down such stereotypes.

Although the research is continuing, Ms. Fox suggested a number of strategies:

— Hire more female teachers in math and the hard sciences. "We've found that a female teacher for an all-boy class doesn't suppress the boys, but that a female teacher seemed to help the girls. I'm convinced that it makes a difference," Ms. Fox said.

— Actively recruit high school girls to take advanced placement classes in math and the sciences. Such an effort would require a major turnabout on the part of many high school counseling departments.

" . . . the boy is taught to achieve, the girl to prove that she doesn't achieve, will never achieve. The same threat hangs over the unachieving boy and the achieving girl, the threat that he or she will never be chosen by a member of the opposite sex." — Margaret Mead

— Set up opportunities for gifted girls to learn together. "If there are no boys around, the leadership roles must fall to the girls."

— Bring successful female role models into class. Just the presence in the classroom of a woman engineer might go a long way to dispel stereotypes.

— And establish effective lifestyle planning for high school girls.

"What kind of a career are high school girls interested in?" Ms. Fox asked. "How can they reconcile their career interests with marriage? Who talks to kids about questions like that?"

Eighth in a Series

Youth's Gift Shone From Scrap Of Paper

APRIL 22, 1979

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Around Hillhouse High School, where he was enrolled but rarely attended class, Steve Bradley had a reputation as a hustler.

By the time he was 16, he had already stolen a car, spent two weeks in the city jail and gotten out only by promising his mother he'd go to church every night.

But Steve Bradley had a hidden talent. It would come out in odd places at odd times on little scraps of paper. Unknown to almost everyone, Bradley could write.

He would write about the men he saw on the street, desperate men with failure on their faces, and he would write about the man he wanted to be — "he had clothes, he had money, he had a penthouse."

One day some six years ago, one of those scraps of paper made its way to a school counselor. The counselor passed it on to a teacher. And the teacher, Jean Blanning, began working with Bradley.

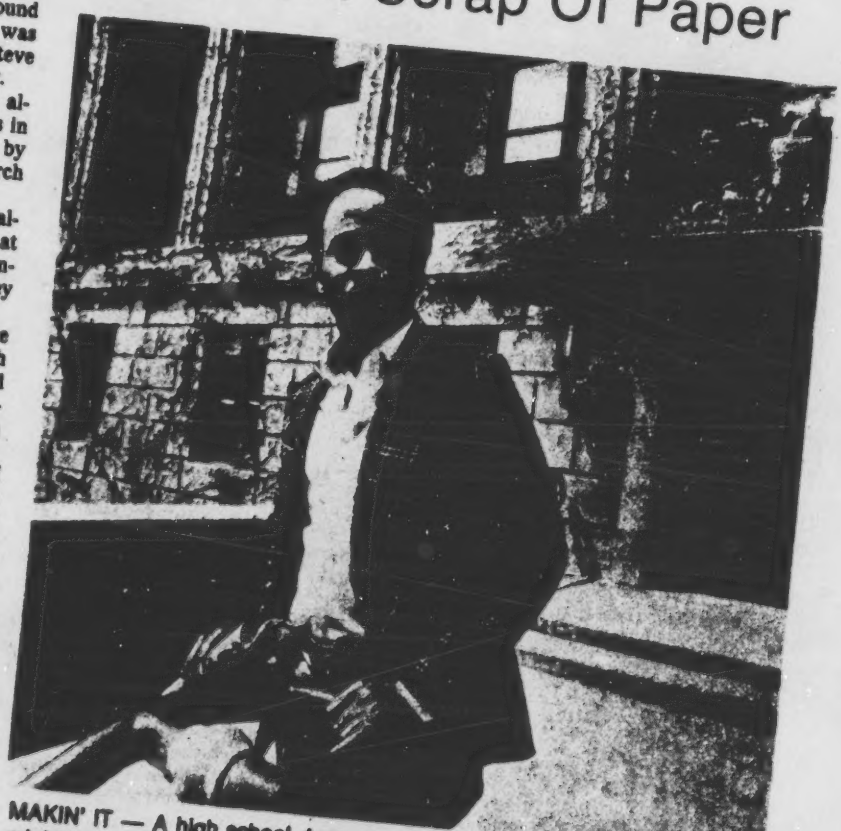
They were an unlikely pair. Bradley was young, poor and black. What he knew best was the backside of the "Congo," the street that forms the center of life in New Haven's ghetto.

He also knew how to break into houses, spend a night in a fancy bed and slip out unnoticed in the early morning.

At 44, Mrs. Blanning was the wife of a Yale University chaplain, a white liberal who liked to talk about the value of the "intellectual life."

She worked at Hillhouse, the city's nearly all-black high school, as director of the school's independent study program for gifted and talented students.

But Bradley and Mrs. Blanning had one thing in common: a fascination with moral choice.



MAKIN' IT — A high school dropout, Steve Bradley of New Haven, Conn., might have ended as one of the hundreds of gifted minority youth who are passed over by school systems and turn their talents against society. But a teacher found Bradley and unlocked his gift with words.

For Bradley, the choice arose at an early age. "When I was in junior high," he recalled, "I wanted to be a pimp. Because that's the guy. I thought I'd do the macho thing on the street. But deep down, I knew I was wrong."

A decent student, Bradley entered high school but he never finished. "The

classes at the school turned me off," he said. "In creative writing, the teacher would tell you what to write and how to write it. I wanted to really create something."

What Bradley couldn't find in school he sought on the street. Instead of going to class, he'd wander downtown, try on coats in clothing stores and stand in bookstores reading what was on the shelves until he was thrown out.

He also began drinking, smoking marijuana and stealing.

"I trusted my probation officer," Bradley said. "I'd get high and go talk to her. One day she said to me, 'Steve, you are not a dumb guy. Why are you doing this?' She said she wanted to give me a second chance. So I got a job washing dishes at Grant's."

Bradley also got up the courage to show a short story he had written to a school counselor who passed it on to Mrs. Blanning.

"Steve was a drop-in," Mrs. Blanning recalled. "The guidance counselor told me that when he came to her, he couldn't see one day ahead of the next."

Bradley's short story was about "the preacher," a man whom he'd met on the street. The preacher had preached the Gospel on the corner, gone off to the Vietnam War and come back a dope dealer. Bradley couldn't make sense of it.

"Steve was struggling with moral questions," Mrs. Blanning said. "The 'whys' of human behavior. And that indicated he was philosophical, conceptual . . . I was stunned and bewildered by his insight."

Mrs. Blanning was so stunned by Bradley's insight that she worked with him day and night on his writing. The two of them would sit together, in the Hillhouse library, whenever Bradley would decide to come to school, and pore over his material.

Together, they transformed Bradley's short story into a play. Drama students at the school put the play on videotape. And the tape ran at a conference conducted at a downtown hotel.

"I invited a couple of guys from the street to come see it," Bradley said. "It was my way of telling them, 'Hey, I'm not a bum.' After that, I could take them to my house, put on an apron and bake cookies and they'd still respect me."

Bradley's father was proud, too. He used to tell his friends, "See that hotel there? My boy's got a play going on there."

The play gave Bradley the impetus he needed. He began writing prolifically, picked up his GED in the space of a summer and, with Mrs. Blanning's help, got into a special program for minority youth at Brandeis University.

After a successful year at Brandeis, Bradley moved on to Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., but eventually left because he couldn't handle the school's unstructured program.

Since then, he's worked a number of jobs — insurance salesman, public relations officer and reporter in a summer intern program at a newspaper.

"But I spent most of my time in the newsroom writing poems," Bradley said. "Some pretty good stuff, people tell me."

Today, at 24, Bradley hasn't fully achieved his potential. But he's a different man than he was six years ago.

The Steve Bradley who used to steal from people is now responsible for a public payroll in his clerk's job in the comptroller's office — at the New Haven City Hall.

The Steve Bradley who used to skip school more often than he attended almost never misses a day of work.

And the Steve Bradley who used to turn his talents against society has begun to use his gifts to create. "As long as I'm alive," he said, "I'll be writing."

Bradley has tried to forget much of his past. But he passes on to others some of the things he's learned from it.

"I talk to my nieces and nephews," he said. "I tell them, 'Do your English and do your math. The mind is more important than anything.' "

Gifted Minority Pupil Stands 1 Chance In 200 Of Being Spotted

WASHINGTON — A poster is prominently displayed in Patsy Blackshear's third-floor office at Seaton Elementary School in the nation's largest black-majority school system. From it gazes a young black student, and the headline reads: "Bobby is a genius and nobody knows."

The message reflects a growing nationwide concern that gifted minority students — whether they be black, Chicano or American Indian — are not being identified in public schools. More than that, they are not being adequately served.

"Minorities are the least served in our gifted population," said Dorothy Sisk, director of the federal Office of Gifted and Talented. "They are locked out largely because of discriminatory identification criteria."

Last fall, a federal task force found that a typical gifted child in the nation's public schools has about one chance in 20 of being identified. But for minority children, the chances are less than one in 200.

"It's as if there's a shining lantern and somebody has put a basket over it," said James Gallagher, a child psychologist and an expert on gifted education. "Our job is to lift the basket."

In its closing hours, the 95th Congress began the job by passing the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978.

Among other provisions, the act requires that states receiving federal funds for gifted students must use 50 percent of the amount for projects that include a component for identifying gifted and talented minority students.

"School districts have been far too willing to assume that all minority students need remedial help," said an aide to Rep. Shirley Chisholm, D-N.Y., who drafted the new legislation. "We have bright minority kids who need to be nurtured and encouraged as well."

While traditional intelligence quotient tests have come under fire for being culturally biased, a number of researchers around the country, including Mary Meeker of California and E. Paul Torrance of the University of Georgia at Athens, have developed other tests that are considered less discriminatory.

Gradually, school systems have begun to draw on the new techniques to identify gifted minority children, or to come up their own screening techniques combining a variety of devices.

In the nation's capital, where the public school population is 96 percent black, school officials have begun a program to discover and unlock the intellectual talents of gifted minority youth, many of whom might flee to private schools in search of educational excellence.

"Our underlying concern is that we're losing a lot of our talent in the city," said Ms. Blackshear, the district's coordinator of gifted education. "Our

Photo by MICHAEL P. O'BRIEN

GRANDE DAME — Mary Hunter Wolf watches a student in a class for gifted minority youth in New Haven, Conn. Once a Broadway director, Mrs. Wolf has turned her talents to unlocking children's creativity. Observing with her is Hector Ruiz from New York's Jazz Mobile art education project.

more capable black youth are enrolling in private schools."

In fact, a 15-year-old organization called the Black Student Fund actively recruits bright young black students out of the D.C. schools and into private schools.

"The kids we end up placing aren't necessarily the brightest, but the parents who call us often feel that their children aren't getting enough of a challenge in the schools," said fund director Phillipa Jackson.

Last fall, the D.C. school system embarked on a pilot project at 12 elementary and junior high schools aimed at tapping the brain power of 390 youngsters at an early age.

"When you look at our test results in the district, you find that test scores start to go down as the students get older," Ms. Blackshear said. "So we felt it was important to identify the students at a young age."

The students were identified as being intellectually gifted by the results of achievement tests, grades, teacher nominations and inventories of creativity in problem solving.

Intelligence tests, however, were ruled out because of a decade-old court decision that forbids the district from using them because of alleged racial bias. The same decision also banned homogeneous ability grouping in the district, a proviso that programs for the gifted have to work around.

Based on the results of the screening, students who scored in the top 20 percent were interviewed by teams of educators. After the interviews, the top 10 percent were chosen to participate in the pilot program.

Under the program, students ranging from kindergarten to seventh grade spend at least two 50-minute periods a week in special "pull-out" classes aimed at developing their intellectual abilities.

The curriculum varies from school to school, but all schools try to develop critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches, creative and productive thinking and student directed learning.

At the Bancroft School, science teacher Julia Barra works with a dozen first- and second-grade students for an hour every week to develop their abstract thinking skills.

In one exercise, the students worked in small groups, eagerly examining wooden figures including balls, triangles and squares.

Ms. Barra systematically asked the students to sort the objects by a variety of criteria. First the objects were to be grouped by length, then by shape, then by color and so forth.

"Many minority children are people-oriented," she said. "I am trying to use

Staff photo by JIM VINCENT

HARD LOOK — Sabrina Pittman, a gifted 9-year-old student in Washington, D.C., examines a slide in a biology class. Children like Sabrina stand less than one chance in 200 of being identified as gifted.

the objects to get them to go from the concrete to the abstract."

Denise Briscoe, a second-grader, said she liked the class. "We like to come down here because we get bored in our other classes," she said.

"Sometimes we have to work in our SRA (Science Research Associates) kits when they don't have anything else for us to do in our regular classes," Denise said.

School Principal Dorothy Robinson, a 30-year veteran of the D.C. school system, said she hoped the pilot program, which will expand to other schools next year, would "save" some youngsters who turn off to school.

"After 30 years," she said, "I know some of these children become bored if they aren't stimulated. Some of them just get lost in the system and others drop out."

She added, "For years, we've been dealing with kids who are exceptional on the lowest end of the educational spectrum. Now we are finally dealing with exceptional students at the other end."

Ninth in a Series

APRIL 23, 1979

Special Teachers Needed To Supply Gifted Education

BROOKSVILLE, Fla. — Teacher Wendy Cutts, clad in blue jeans and tennis shoes, sifted through the soil alongside her students at an archeological dig on Chinsegut Hill 40 miles north of Tampa. "There's only so much you can learn in a textbook," she said.

Ms. Cutts is one of some 100 teachers being trained to work with gifted children through a graduate degree program at the University of South Florida at Tampa.

As part of the program, she teaches an archeology class to gifted students from local elementary schools every Saturday morning.

"There's so much about these kids that you don't understand until you actually work with them," she said.

The University of South Florida is one of only 34 institutions of higher education in the country which offers degree programs in gifted child education.

According to experts, the dearth of programs has created a serious shortage of trained personnel to work with the gifted.

A federal panel last fall named leadership training as one of the three "most neglected" areas in gifted education. It found that the country needs 22,560 teachers of the gifted, but turns out only 50 teachers a year with an emphasis on gifted education.

In the Oregon State System of Higher Education, there is only one degree program in the field, a master's program at the University of Oregon.

The University of South Florida, which has one of the nation's most comprehensive programs, offers a master's degree in gifted child education.

It also has an "education specialist" degree at the graduate level to train administrators of gifted education programs, and a Ph.D. in exceptional child education with an emphasis on the gifted.

Why do teachers of the gifted need special training? "They are working with special children," replied Linda Addison, 30, who coordinates the university's program.

She took over the program after former director Dorothy Sisk left to head the federal government's Office of Gifted and Talented.

"Gifted children are different from average children," Ms. Addison said. "Just as you would not expect the average classroom teacher to work with the handicapped without some training, you can't expect them to work with the gifted without training."

Besides being exceptionally bright, gifted children are also highly creative, they ask unusual questions and they often challenge authority, Ms. Addison said.

Typically, she said, teachers feel threatened by those qualities in children. "A common response is, 'What will all the other kids think of me if I can't answer this child's question?' " she said.

While a trained teacher can help develop a gifted child's potential, and untrained teacher can cause emotional damage, Ms. Addison said.

"I know of one little kid who hyperventilated at lunch and had to be taken to the hospital because the teacher criticized him so much," Ms. Addison said. "This kid was a highly creative child."

On the other hand, she said, a teacher can praise a gifted child so much that the child falls apart at the first experience of failure.

While Ms. Addison disputes the notion that teachers of the gifted must themselves be geniuses, she believes they must have certain special qualities, including a philosophy of education which sees the teacher as a guide, not an authority.

"The teacher has to be willing to give up authority in the classroom and say, 'I don't know the answer to that, but I'll help you find out,' " Ms. Addison said.

She said teachers of the gifted must also be creative and original and have a high degree of "task commitment" to round up learning materials and community resources for students.

"The regular classroom teacher can turn to page 34 for the lesson," she said. "In gifted education, there are no books for you to rely on."

The strengths of the university's teacher training program are its wide variety of course offerings in gifted education and its required practicum in which teachers in training must work with gifted children themselves before they qualify for an advanced degree.

"The thing that's wrong with most teacher training," Ms. Addison said, "is that teachers just don't spend enough time with kids."

Ordeal Of School Shatters Boy's Stability

Eight-year-old Jason Rowen has never sat still long enough to get all the way through an intelligence test. But from what he has done, experts say his IQ is too high to be measured.

"He just goes off the top of the scale," said one expert.

But Jason (not his real name) is emotionally disturbed. Last year, at the public school he attended in a suburban community in the South, Jason's teacher wanted to put him in a class for "learning disabled" children.

Someone else at the school recommended he go to a mental hospital, while another official suggested he be served at home by an itinerant teacher.

In desperation, Jason's parents found a private therapist who was willing to work with their son. The $40-an-hour counseling fee forced Jason's mother to go back to work.

Today, after a year of therapy, Jason has begun to turn around. But the experience has left his parents and others bitter about the way school systems serve — or fail to serve — gifted children.

Like hundreds of other gifted children, many of Jason's emotional problems stemmed from inappropriate treatment in the classroom. As one expert put it, "School systems may not create gifted children but they sure can destroy them."

To all appearances, Jason is a typical American boy. His school principal calls him "a cute little rascal." Jason wears football jerseys, likes pizza and hamburgers and thrives on Batman and Spiderman cartoons.

But from the time he entered school, Jason has been what one school official called "the terror of the building."

He threw fits in the classroom, scratching and spitting at other students and the teacher for no apparent reason. In the middle of class, he would stand up and scream at the top of his lungs.

Jason also had an imaginary friend. He often blamed his own behavior on the influence of his friend.

Jason's biggest obsession was with numbers. He would engage in long monologues involving sophisticated computations.

"He was the most complicated kid I'd ever been around, and in 34 years in the school system I've seen a few," said the principal.

He added, "You wouldn't believe that there was a public school system in the country that would have him in the classroom."

Bucking pressure from parents and teachers, however, the principal agreed to keep Jason in the building. "His father had a look in his eyes like a man searching for anybody to do anything," the principal said. "If I didn't stick with him, who would?"

The school, which has no program for gifted students, put Jason in classrooms with its veteran teachers. But he refused to fit into their molds.

One teacher nearly flunked him because he refused to do oral reading (he had no problem with "silent" reading), while another threatened to fail him for his sloppy handwriting.

"He just goes off the top of the scale," said one expert.

Even today, it infuriates Jason's third-grade teacher that he won't color inside the lines in his workbook and that he refuses to do his math problems on paper. "He does them all in his head," the teacher lamented.

Asked if Jason were gifted, the teacher replied, "No. He's not gifted. If he had been disciplined and made to pay attention in kindergarten, then he might be gifted."

In contrast to Jason, the teacher said he had at least one gifted student in the class. "Katie (not her real name) over there," he said, "is reading three years above grade level, hands all her work in on time and rarely makes mistakes. She's what I'd call 'gifted.' "

For Jason's mother, the experience of dealing with the school system has been excruciating. "The system isn't used to dealing with anything out of the ordinary," she said. "If a child doesn't fit, they can't deal with it."

She added, "I know he has to learn to put things down on paper. He can't go through life without doing that. But somehow the system has to leave room for his creativity."

When Mrs. Rowen finally got her son to a therapist, he was in a severe condition. "When I first saw him, he looked like he was crazy," the therapist said. "He was all over the place."

The more he worked with Jason, however, the more the therapist discovered that much of Jason's problem — perhaps more than 50 percent — was due to inappropriate treatment at school.

"Jason finds solutions to problems that you and I don't think of," the therapist said. "In class one day, the students were asked how to get from one place to another.

"Jason figured out a new way. What happened to him time and time again was that his creativity got jumped on."

The therapist added, "The school system is a powerful force. It has the power to form and conform. It ought to have the power to create."

Over the past year, the work that Jason has done in therapy has paid off. Both his parents and the school system see a new child emerging, but one whose continued progress rests on a fragile balance.

"He's made it," said the therapist. "He's turned a corner. But if he gets a tough, insensitive teacher again, he'll say .... it, and that will be it."

Last in a Series

APRIL 24, 1979

Parents Expand Schooling To Enrich Children's Lives

PHILADELPHIA — From the outside, the Doubek home in the Olney section of North Philadelphia doesn't look much different from the other row houses around it.

But inside, there's a videotape machine which the children are using to record their family history. Last Thanksgiving, when the family clan gathered, the kids videotaped the entire affair.

In the dining room, a blackboard sits prominently beside the dinner table. During meals, it's used by anyone who has an idea to communicate.

Until recently, there was a clothesline strung from the upstairs to the living room downstairs. It was for 3-year-old Erich during his Tarzan period. "Tarzan couldn't come out of his tree without a rope," explained his mother.

HOME CLASS — Erich Doubek, a computer systems analyst, works with intellectually gifted daughters at their North Philadelphia home. Doubek says he doesn't push his children to achieve, but helps them explore their own interests.

Erich and Nita Doubek are the parents of intellectually gifted children. But they believe that more than genes have gone into the making of their children's intelligence.

"We've worked on the assumption that intelligence can be created by an environment," said Doubek, 36, a computer systems analyst.

Besides young Erich, the Doubeks have 9-year-old twin girls. With long blonde hair and hazel eyes, both girls not only look alike but are highly intelligent. They have IQs in excess of 130.

The girls, Rebecca and Deborah, are among the 4,000 intellectually gifted children who receive special services in the 260,000-student Philadephia public school system.

Every Thursday, the girls are pulled out of their regular classroom at the James Russell Lowell School and go to an enrichment center in the building.

At the center, they study everything from insects to limericks. Under state law, Pennsylvania public schools must offer such special services for children with IQs of 130 or higher.

But much of the education of the Doubek children has occurred at home. And behind it have been parents willing to spend quality time with their children.

"As we looked around, we saw that you couldn't expect the school system to do everything," Doubek said. "You must supplement it. Our question has been, what do you do without interfering with what happens at school?"

For one thing, the Doubeks began reading to their children long before they entered school. "Even when the girls were still in the crib, I read them the Hallmark series on Catherine the Great," said Mrs. Doubek, a housewife with a high school education.

"For a while, I also read them 'The Story of the President,' a book about Warren G. Harding," she said. "People laughed at me, but I don't think they would have understood nursery rhymes any better."

While Mrs. Doubek doesn't consider herself "one of those women's libbers," she has encouraged her children to go beyond sex-role stereotypes. She said she wanted her daughters to grow up to have a marketable skill and to get paid on an equal basis with men.

"I always made it a point to make sure that the girls learned to hammer as well as sew," she said. "I'll never forget when they were 2 years old and dressed in their twin coats. We went into the store to buy dump trucks for them and the lady said, 'My, what lovely boys you have.' "

At the same time, Mrs. Doubek also is teaching her son to cook. "I don't want him to go off to college and not know how to make a meal for himself," she said.

Meals are a focal point of life in the Doubek household. Everybody helps make them and they provide a time not just for breaking bread but for sharing ideas.

"I was raised in a strict German family where you didn't talk at the dinner table," Doubek said. "I don't want my kids to grow up like that."

Dinner table talk at the Doubek home can cover everything from computers to cowboys. "We feel that the kids, even as infants, can understand us and have something to tell us," Mrs. Doubek said.

"In many ways, we (aduits) are the dummies. I believe there is some kind of communication that goes on in the minds of children and we've lost the ability to perceive it."

When Doubek comes home from work, he's more likely to sit and talk with one child on his knee than to bury himself in a newspaper. But he also has what he calls "tickle and tackle" time with his children.

"Our parents try to do as much as they can with us," said Deborah. "It feels like they care. In other families we know, the kids just get ignored."

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Memphis, Tennessee JANUARY 14, 1979

First in a Series

Minimum Competency Tests Short Of Full Acceptance

JIMMIE COVINGTON

Jimmie Covington is a veteran *Commercial Appeal* reporter who has covered the Memphis schools for the past eight years. His work has received six State Bell awards and numerous other commendations for excellence in education reporting.

Because Tennessee had proposed to make competency tests a state-wide requirement for the class of 1982, Covington chose state approaches to competency testing as a Fellowship topic. By studying the programs and issues in other states that had mandated these tests, Covington sought to provide his readers with information relevant to the transition Tennessee was about to make. He was particularly interested in the types of remedial programs other states offered for students unable to pass the tests.

In this series and his Fellowship report, Covington describes the progress, problems and potential of the state-wide competency testing programs that have been mandated around the country. Mr. Covington's Fellowship work was also published in monograph form by *Phi Delta Kappa* Magazine and in a June 1979 issue of *Tennessee Teacher*.

"Any setting of statewide minimum standards for awarding the high school diploma is basically unworkable, exceeds the present measurement arts of the teaching profession and will create more social problems than it can conceivably solve." —National Academy of Education Committee on Testing and Basic Skills.

"We are talking about competency testing as if somehow it is some animal that has come out of the woods and there is nothing like it in education. The truth of the matter is there is hardly anything it is more like than most of the education decision-making that is done." —Dr. James Gallagher, chairman of the North Carolina Minimum Competency Testing Commission.

By JIMMIE COVINGTON

Minimum competency testing — largely imposed by politicians — is the major movement of the 1970s in U.S. education.

It is praised by some, damned by others.

Many politicians, businessmen and members of the general public say testing is needed because academic achievement has declined drastically and something must be done to restore the value of the high school diploma.

Some educators and researchers say, however, there is no firm evidence of a major achievement decline and that new testing requirements may deny diplomas to many students, especially minority and poor students, without improving education. The critics also say the "minimums may become the maximums."

So far, the effect of mandating that students pass a skills test to obtain a high school diploma is unclear. Statewide minimum competency testing programs are still in their infancy.

And 1979 may be a significant year in competency testing.

If there are no delays, Florida and New York this spring will become the first states to graduate high school classes which have been subjected to statewide minimum competency tests.

Any delays, especially in Florida, where the testing has received national attention, could have a chilling effect elsewhere in the country.

In Florida, a federal court lawsuit has been filed charging the testing program is racially disciminatory; a state-appointed task force has recommended a year's delay in denying any diplomas and has called for major revisions in the program, and the state's new governor, Bob Graham, was among state legislators last year who sought a delay in test requirements.

Last year, 77 per cent of Florida's black eleventh graders failed the mathematics section of the functional literacy test (now called the State Student Assessment Test, Part II) while 24 per cent of white students failed. On the communications section, 26 per cent of black students failed while only 3 per cent of white students failed.

Overall, 37 per cent of the state's elev-enth graders failed one or both sections of the test when it was first administered in October, 1977. (The Commercial Appeal on April 9, 1978, ran a mock version of the Florida test in the newspaper's Viewpoint section.)

Based on preliminary results from this year, state education officials estimate that the failure rate among juniors was cut to 25 per cent and that up to 70 per cent of the seniors retaking the test passed this time.

However, there are some indications of increases in student dropouts. At Miami's

Put Yourself To Test With These Samples

Here are several questions similar to those appearing on competency tests in Florida, New York, North Carolina and Virginia. The tests differ greatly from state to state.

1. A package of 8 hamburger buns costs 65 cents. A package of 12 buns costs 95 cents. You need to buy 4 dozen buns. What would you save if you bought packages of 12 buns instead of packages of 8?

A. $0.10
B. $0.30
C. Nothing. The cost is the same.
D. Nothing. You would lose money.

2. Wash Day Wonder detergent is packaged in boxes of four different sizes: regular, large, giant, commercial. Which size container is the best buy per ounce?

A. Regular, 12 oz. for $.40
B. Large, 20 oz. for $.50
C. Giant, 30 oz. for $.95
D. Commercial, 60 oz. for $1.95

3. Add: 12.7 + 0.36 =

A. 0.487
B. 1.63
C. 13.06
D. 12.43

4. If the sales tax is 4%, how much sales tax is there on a bill for $7.25 in a restaurant?

A. $.08
B. $.11
C. $.28
D. $.29

5. Multiply 3.4 by .6

A. 20.4
B. 2.40
C. 2.04
D. .204

6. Read the paragraph below and choose the statement which best expresses the writer's opinion.

It's time this state had a governor who wasn't owned by the big city bosses and the crooked machines. Our present governor has been taking orders from big-time gamblers and racketeers for the last four years. That's why I support John Smith to replace the present governor.

The writer believes that:

A. One of the big city bosses is the governor.
B. Gamblers control John Smith.
C. The present governor deserves support.
D. John Smith is an honest man.

7. Answer the question from the paragraph below.

A short "beep" tone heard on your telephone line about every 15 seconds means that the person with whom you are talking is recording your conversation. This signal is provided by the telephone company for your protection. Use of a recorder without a recorder-connector containing a tone-warning device is contrary to the company's tariffs and not permitted, except on emergency police and fire department lines.

A short "beep" tone on your phone means that:

A. Your phone is out of order.
B. Your conversation is being recorded.
C. The police need to use your line.
D. The number you are calling is busy.

8. Answer the question from the selection.

There are many places to look if you want to purchase a used car. You can look in the classified ads and find a private owner who wishes to sell his car. In this situation, you will probably have to pay cash, and you should make sure the car is in good running condition.

Another place to purchase a used car is from a new car dealer. Those dealers usually keep the best of the cars that are traded in. For this reason, a used car might be more expensive than if you bought it from a private individual.

The third place to purchase a used car is from a used car lot. The price of these cars is slightly less, however, than new car dealers. Used car dealers generally get their cars at car auctions or from new car dealers. A good used car may be less expensive, but it is wise to check out the mechanical condition of the car.

Which sentence expresses the main idea of this article best?

A. Most of the used cars at a new car dealer are expensive but not in good running condition.

B. There are many places where you can purchase a used car.

C. The best place to buy a used car is from a private individual.

D. Used car lot dealers often buy their cars at auctions.

9. Read the safety warning and answer the question.

Cold Medicine — ADULT DOSAGE: Two tablets every four hours, one to four times daily as needed, or as directed by physician. For children 6 to 12 years of age, use half the adult dosage.

Staff Graphics

WARNING: Do not give to children under 6 or use for more than 10 days unless directed by a physician. KEEP THIS AND ALL MEDICINES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

Your 3-year-old brother has a cold, and you give him one-half of one cold tablet. According to the warning, you are acting:

A. Correctly.
B. Incorrectly.

10. Identify facts and opinions.

Two tourists to the Miami area, Bob Greene and Victor Hayes of New Jersey, suffered serious injury when their Ford van, driven by Bob Greene, collided with the Chevrolet driven by Miami resident May Herndon. The accident occurred at 11 a.m. Saturday at the intersection of West Dixie Highway and 25th Street.

The cause of the accident is under investigation and neither driver has been charged as of this report. Witnesses have stated that the van was out of control. At least one witness believes the driver of the van was "on something." Mechanical failure is another possibility.

Bob Greene is listed in critical condition at Jackson. Victor Hayes is listed as serious, but stable. May Herndon was treated for injuries and released late last night. The investigation will continue.

Which of the following sentences is opinion?

A. Bob Greene and Victor Hayes are visitors.

B. The accident happened in the morning.

C. The driver of the van was "on something."

D. There are witnesses to the accident.

Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. D; 5. C; 6. D; 7. B; 8. B; 9. B; 10. C.

Jackson High School, only 362 of the 615 students who failed the test last year took it again this year.

Florida legislators provided $10 million for remedial programs last year and $26.5 million this year.

The state's 1976 Educational Accountability Act requires basic skills testing in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 plus "satisfactory performance in functional literacy" as one of the standards for high school graduation. Students who meet all standards except the literacy requirement are to receive a "certificate of completion."

In New York, a survey report last spring indicated that 85 per cent of the state's high school juniors had met the reading and mathematics requirement by that time. The students have been taking the tests since they were ninth graders. Competency tests are graded by local school systems.

New York state has a long history of testing. The respected Regents examinations, which have been used since 1865, are end-of-course examinations students may take if they pursue certain level courses. About 50 to 55 per cent of high school students usually take the Regents examinations. The state competency tests are designed for students not taking the Regents examinations.

New York education officials over a three-year period have changed graduation competency requirements three times. Stung by criticism that the initial tests were too easy, new reading, writing and mathematics tests are being developed for the class of 1981.

In elementary grades, New York since 1966 has had fall reading and mathematics achievement testing for all students in grades 3 and 6. Preliminary competency tests are planned for grades 8 and 9.

Nationally, only about 8 to 10 states, including Tennessee, have or are developing statewide competency tests as a high school graduation requirement. Another 10 to 12 states, including Oregon, California and Arizona, have adopted state competency requirements for graduation but assessment of the competencies is left to local school systems.

About 16 additional states, including Kentucky, have adopted competency programs but the requirements are not tied directly to graduation, and the remaining 14 or so states have taken no action on the issue. A number of cities, including Denver, have local testing programs.

Tests cover basic academic skills in reading, writing and mathematics; practical applications of the skills, or a combination of both. Many states with testing programs have achievement or competency testing in lower grades as well as high school grades.

Only small numbers of students across the country thus far have been denied diplomas on the basis of competency tests.

The Arizona state Board of Education requires that students "demonstrate ability to read at a ninth grade level of proficiency as shall be established by the local district." There are no statewide competency tests in Arizona.

An Arizona survey revealed that 202 of 32,294 seniors in 1978 failed to graduate because they did not meet proficiency standards. Another 2,407 did not graduate because of failure to meet other requirements.

In 1978 in Richmond, Va., 212 of 1,746 seniors failed to graduate. Of those failing, 156 met competency requirements but not course requirements, 45 did not meet either course or competency requirements and only 11 met course requirements but not competency requirements.

Some other state minimum competency approaches are:

• North Carolina — Competency tests in reading and mathematics were given last fall to high school juniors and will be a graduation requirement for the class of 1980. The state Competency Testing Commission, established by a 1977 state law, made an extensive study and recommended modified forms of two commercially developed tests. The state provided $4.45 million in remedial funding for this year, and Gov. James B. Hunt, a driving force behind the testing program, said $4 million more will be made available if needed.

Under a separate law, skills tests are given to students in grades 1 and 2 and standardized achievement tests are given to pupils in grades 3, 6 and 9.

• Virginia — Commercially developed reading and mathematics tests were selected during a hasty study as a result of a 1978 law which requires the class of 1981 to exhibit minimum competencies. The tests were given in November to 10th graders and in the future will be given to ninth graders. Early projections are that only 15 per cent of the 10th graders failed the reading test and 18 per cent the mathematics test.

Virginia has an annual standardized achievement testing program usually in grades 4, 6, 8 and 11. State basic skills tests are also being developed for elementary grades although they will not be tied directly to promotion and retention.

• Alabama, Delaware and Maryland — Statewide competency tests for the class of 1981 are now being developed in Alabama and Delaware. A test requirement is scheduled for Maryland's class of 1982.

• Nevada — Minimum competency graduation tests, which are to go into effect with the class of 1982, are being developed under a 1977 state law. Testing in grades 3, 6 and 9 also is required.

• Kentucky — Under 1978 legislation, all students in grades 3, 5, 7 and 10 will be given achievement tests in the basic skills areas in April and each local school system must develop a plan to aid students next year in grades 4, 6, 8 and 11 who need help. There is no graduation requirement based on test scores.

• Tennessee — The state Board of Education has mandated that juniors will be given a minimum competency test in the spring of 1981 which must be passed before they graduate in the spring of 1982. A hastily obtained basic skills test was given to eighth graders in the spring of 1978.

Second in a Series

JANUARY 15, 1979

Minimum Competency Tests Earn Low Marks From Experts

U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest Boyer says some approaches to minimum competency testing amount to placing "an evaluation time bomb at the end" of high school.

Dr. Arthur Wise, senior social scientist with the Rand Corporation and a former official of the National Institute of Education (NIE), says, "It looks like a cheap fix on a serious problem."

The early stages of the Florida testing program resemble "controlled barbarism," says Dr. William Spady, an NIE senior research sociologist.

David Cohen, a Harvard University professor, says, "Minimum competency testing bears many, many marks of punitiveness and stigma."

Marianne Amarel of Educational Testing Service predicts, "We will see few, if any, thoughtful and judiciously implemented minimum competency tests. The omens and portents point to constriction of the curriculum."

Jack Bardon of the University of North Carolina faculty says, "There is an absence of firm data about actual consequences... The problem of minimums becoming maximums is a serious one."

Minimum competency testing, which has been adopted in several states either

through legislative action or political pressure on state boards of education, has drawn biting criticism from a number of educators, researchers and sociologists.

Tennessee is among 8-10 states which have adopted statewide testing plans as a high school graduation requirement. Another 10-12 states have adopted state competency requirements but assessment of the skills is left to local school systems. About 16 additional states have competency programs but they are not tied directly to high school graduation.

Joan C. Baratz, director of Educational Testing Service's Education Policy Research Institute in Washington, said, "Minimum competency testing will not last as a distinct phenomenon any more than performance contracting or 'new math' have persisted as central foci of educational change.

"New fads, or at least new terms to describe allegedly basic changes in practice and procedure, tend to fly through the educational profession, but they tend also to be short lived."

However, Ms. Baratz is perhaps more moderate in her views than some critics of the minimum competency movement.

"There is no cause to believe that the minimum standard craze hurts children any more than what we have been doing in the past," she said. "Just as it is politically necessary to pass legislation setting standards, so it is politically infeasible to have a majority of students fail them."

And Boyer, the U.S. commissioner of education, said he favors "testing for the right reason at the right time" although he is opposed to programs which merely place competency tests at the end of the high school years.

"The reason (for testing) is to find out weaknesses of students and the time is in the early grades where they can be aided," he said. "I believe it should occur in the first few grades with every effort to be made to aid those not achieving. Evaluation should be used to keep people in school rather than kick them out."

Spady, the NIE sociologist, said, "We impose testing conditions on people as though tests are going to solve the problems. We have not been willing to go off into entertaining a new method of thinking about solutions and strategies . . . The whole question people are not asking is why are we doing all of this testing and what is it we are going to gain."

Wise said, "My view is that there is no decline in achievement. The most relevant statistics, from the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) on all 17-year-olds, show that reading and other (skills) have remained stable since the test began in 1969

"The college boards (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) have declined but they are less relevant to the issue. They cover more advanced skills and are taken only by the top one-third of students. In part, this has been a media event. The decline of college board scores was treated sensationally by the press. This interacted with politicians' natural desire to save taxpayers' money . . . I think, in fact, state legislators have taken it upon themselves (to impose competency testing). I don't think the public took it upon themselves to do it."

The National Academy of Education's committee on testing and basic skills said in a report to the Health, Education and Welfare Department's assistant secretary for education:

"The NAE panel believes that any setting of statewide minimum competency standards for awarding the high school diploma — however understandable the public clamor which has produced the current movement and expectation — is basically unworkable, exceeds the present measurement arts of the teaching profession and will create more social problems than it can conceivably solve.

"It is basically unworkable because in many populous states cut-off points for a passing grade that are politically and educatively acceptable to parents, pupils and educators would have to be so low that an overwhelming majority of students would be allowed to pass. This would make the diploma standard almost meaningless . . .

"The effort to determine and assure minimum competency standards for high school graduation will also fall of its own weight, for the scaffolding of existing test designs is too weak to carry such an emotionally laden and ambiguous burden. Continuing any extensive efforts and funds in this direction is wasteful and takes attention away from the major tasks of improving schools."

However, the committee, whose membership includes educators from several of the nation's major universities, said it agreed that "a series of standardized tests at the lower grade levels used for diagnosing individual student weaknesses, pinpointing remediation needs and building public pressures if schoolwide performances in basic skills continue over time to be consistently low, could be positive influences on student learning."

An evaluation panel, headed by Dr. Ralph Tyler, senior consultant with Science Research Associates, conducted a study of the Florida testing program for the National Education Association and the Florida Teaching Profession-NEA.

Among its findings, the panel reported, "It appears as if the current class of eleventh graders who are black and poor were sacrificed for the purpose of rapid implemention of the functional literacy segment of the accountability act.

"It is evident that there is little active concern for the appropriateness of the testing program for a large segment of the school population (the black and poor)."

Dr. Tom Innes, director of educational assessment with the Tennessee State Testing Center in Knoxville, said, "If you ask me to separate the competent from the incompetent, I would say I don't want to play God.

"I don't think measurement can do that. No test can be devised that will separate them. And the people who say they can are speaking more of hope than they are of experience."

Third in a Series

JANUARY 16, 1979

School Tests Are Seen As Inspirations

Minimum competency testing has led to "kids buckling down and getting serious about their school work," North Carolina and Florida education officials said.

"We've had a genuinely positive reaction throughout the state," said Dr. William Brown, director of research for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

"The kids had picked up the notion they did not have to achieve much to go from grade to grade. Several years of lowered expectations have resulted in kids doing less. With this year's raised expectations, the kids are doing more.

"The remedial program for some youngsters will be quick and rather simple. For others, it will take the full two years (before graduation) to get them up to standard. I really don't expect many children not to pass."

Dr. Thomas Fisher, director of student assessment with the Florida Department of Education, said, "Students clearly learn what they are supposed to learn and they do it. The indication we have is that the challenge is well received by the students.

"I think it has created something of an instant revolution particularly in secondary education to the benefit of the students. I think we are giving them a golden opportunity. It seems we are putting every creative effort into helping students who have been passed along before . . . .

"We are not testing to fail students. We are testing to determine if our students have mas-

tered functional math and communications skills. For those students in need of additional work to attain these skills, we will provide additional assistance so they can eventually be able to pass the test."

Fisher, a former Tennessean, said charges that the test is racially discriminatory are not valid.

"It discriminates between people who can read and those who can't. It discriminates between those who can count and those who can't," he said.

He said the state went to great efforts to develop the learning objectives and the tests, including wide involvement of local school districts, field testing and revisions.

"The heat and the controversy (about the testing program) have come from outside the State of Florida," he said. "I can't think of a single newspaper in Florida that has come out and said it is a bad idea . . . "

Eileen H. Arpke, an English teacher in Okaloosa County, Fla., and president of the Florida Council of Teachers of English, said the state testing program is "the most constructive and educationally supportive move toward an educated populace that we have had in 20 years . . . .

"Graduation from high school should mean that the basic keys to knowledge are in the hands of the graduate for whatever purpose and extent he wishes to use them. Every prospective employer, upper level academic institution and student should be fully aware of the skill levels guaranteed by successful completion of high school and award of the diploma.

"We as educators are less than honest to award a diploma or promote a child who has not mastered the basic skills for each grade level."

Dr. W. E. Campbell, state superintendent of public instruction in Virginia, supports minimum competency testing.

"Public education needs something to restore public confidence," he said. "Public education is almost pricing itself out of business in many localities. I think that if the people involved in public education will recognize the values inherent in competency based education we will restore public education to the eminence which it should enjoy."

North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt, a major force behind adoption of a competency testing program in his state, said, "Our decision was that we ought not to let any more students graduate without minimum competency.

"I think that the diploma today without skills really doesn't do much good. We are identifying weaknesses. We are then going to remediate these weaknesses. It may be a little tough on the 11th graders this year but it is better to find their weaknesses now than to perpetrate a fraud . . . "

Florida provided $10 million last year and $26.5 million this year in state remedial funding. North Carolina provided $4.45 million in remedial funding this year and Hunt said he will shift budgets to double the amount if needed. The North Carolina State Board of Education has requested $10 million in remedial funding for next year and $5 million for the year after that.

Arthur Hertz, a Miami businessman who heads the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's new education quality action committee, strongly endorses the testing approach.

"It (the quality of education) has gotten to the point where business people have to take some action," he said. "We are getting a very poor product."

Ken Robinson, a parent and vice chairman of the Dade County (Miami) school system's community citizens advisory committee, said, "I think it is sensational. Nothing should be done to water down the effectiveness of the test. I don't think a child should be able to graduate without being able to function in the world."

Harold Knott, principal of Miami's Killian High School, said, "It is definitely making young people aware of the fact they have got to learn some basic skills in order to get a diploma. I believe we see considerably more effort and work on the part of students to learn."

Herman Carter, principal of John F. Kennedy High School in Richmond, Va., said students have taken a mature approach to competency testing.

"They are not rebelling against it," he said. "They missed something somewhere and have accepted that fact and are trying to do something about it."

Reaction among students in several states appears to be mixed. Some students who pass competency tests think they are so easy they are ridiculous. Some who fail the tests think they are unfair and should be abolished.

Randy Godsel, a senior at Mosley High School in Bay County (Panama City), Fla., exemplified the frustration of some students as he testified before a state task force in Florida.

"There is too much time span between remedial work and taking the test again," Randy said. "To be a senior in high school and know you may not get your diploma . . . When you have had to live with something all summer, it is bad. You have your parents onto you all the time."

Maurice Thomas, 18, a student at Bay County's Rutherford High School, said he had "been hitting the books day and night" in an effort to pass the test.

"I am a senior with 12 years of school and there is a question of whether I am going to pass or not," Maurice said. "I am under pressure as a student. I think the pressure ought to be on the teachers."

Joyce Young, 17, a senior at Leon High School in Tallahassee who passed the test, said, "I thought it was a waste of time. It was on a low level. I feel you need a higher grade of education than that to graduate from high school."

At John F. Kennedy High School in Richmond, Michael Newly, 15, a junior, said, "The diploma means more so I am glad."

Last in a Series

JANUARY 17, 1979

School Tests Lack Funding At State Level

Tennessee, which traditionally ranks near the bottom among states in funding of education, lags far behind many states in the minimum competency movement in funding, manpower and planning devoted to testing programs.

The state Board of Education has mandated that seniors graduating in 1982 must pass a proficiency examination to receive a regular high school diploma, but the state so far has not indicated that any major funding will be provided for test development and administration or remedial programs.

The state board plans to pass the cost of mandated elementary testing along to local school systems, some of which are already financially strapped.

In Nov. 10, 1977, action the board specified that local school systems must administer at least two preliminary diagnostic tests — one at the fourth, fifth or sixth grade level and one at the eighth grade level. The state is providing the eighth grade test until the spring of 1981 when the graduation test will be given to high school juniors.

Most states with state testing programs provide and fund all required tests from the state level.

Approval of the Tennessee testing requirement last year came in the middle of the budget year and no extra funding was provided for testing. To fund last year's eighth grade basic skills tests, state education officials scraped about $23,000 from within existing budgets and called on the Tennessee State Testing and Evaluation Center in Knoxville to absorb the $10,000 costs of grading the test.

There was only enough funding to purchase one test for each four eighth graders in the state. Tests had to be shipped from school system to school system leading to scheduling problems.

Because of the short time span between the board mandate and last spring's eighth grade diagnostic testing, education officials selected the learning objectives from the Denver school system's proficiency and review test and purchased a test from the firm of CTB-McGraw Hill.

Research had been done on the Denver test in the spring of 1977 when the test was given on a pilot basis to 4,250 seniors in 27 Tennessee high schools. Factors involved in choosing the Denver approach included the fact Denver has had its program since the early 1960s and that after a few years the failure rate had been reduced to a low percentage, about 1.5 per cent.

Although the program is praised by officials within the Denver school system and Denver administrators have acted as consultants in several states, there are questions about whether the Denver testing program has effectively improved education in that city.

Racine, Wis., newsman Robert Frahm studied the Denver program and came away without a clear answer.

Frahm said it does not appear that remedial programs are tied directly to the proficiency testing program, that Denver schools say they have little data on student achievement and nothing to indicate whether anything has improved since the testing began in 1962 and that several business firms he contacted said Denver graduates have problems with basic skills.

Realizing that last year's eighth grade test was selected too hastily, Tennessee education officials worked with teachers across the state in developing 80 new learning objectives for a new eighth grade diagnostic test this year. The new test will cover about 50 of the 80 objectives but teachers and students will not be told which 50.

The state board has approved the purchase of a new test from Scholastic Testing Service to replace last year's CTB-McGraw Hill test, and this year enough test booklets are to be purchased to administer to all the state's 80,000 eighth graders at the same time.

The actual graduation test has not been developed but it is generally believed the test will be just another version of the eighth grade tests.

Tennessee for the past three years has had an educational assessment program involving achievement testing in a sample of schools in the state.

This program is handled by the state Testing and Evaluation Center under a contract with the state Department of Education. The center receives about $165,000 annually from the state, including $25,000 it received before the assessment program began.

State testing budgets in several other states include Florida, $1.3 million; North Carolina, $164,168 for competency testing and $902,858 for achievement testing; Virginia, about $2.6 million over a two-year period; New York, about $800,000 under one testing office plus additional funds under other offices (grading of state tests is done by local school systems in New York); Kentucky, $400,000 this year and $1.75 million next year (the state is developing a basic skills testing program but graduation will not be tied to test scores); Alabama, $250,000 for testing program development but an official said only about $100,000 to $150,000 is expected to be used in a pilot program.

Hugh McDade of Alcoa, Tenn., a state Board of Education member, has been the chief advocate on the board of a graduation testing program.

"Too many people are getting high school diplomas who do not demonstrate the most minimal skills in reading, writing and mathematics," McDade said during one hearing in Memphis.

"We are talking about reading, writing and mathematics, knowing what words mean and how to spell. If we aren't teaching that in public schools today, tell me what are we teaching."

Results from the state assessment sample testing of students in grade 4, 8 and 12 indicate that average Tennessee students in each of these grades are achieving from one month to two years and one month below typical students in the nation in the subjects tested.

However, Dr. Tom Innes, director of educational assessment with the state testing center, said available test data indicate that Tennessee students today are achieving over all at about the same level as students did 10 to 20 years ago. He said Tennessee scores are slightly higher in some subject areas and slightly lower in other areas than in the past.

He said statistics from last year's Tennessee sampling indicate a significant gain in achievement among eighth grade students.

The Memphis city school system has set up a local competency testing program with testing planned in grades 2, 5 and 8 at the elementary and junior high levels as well as high school testing. About 10 per cent of last year's second graders were placed in new "extended time" classes this year to help them overcome basic skill deficiences. Reduced pupil-teacher ratios in the classes added about $228,000 to school system costs.

Testing in the fifth grade is planned this year.

At this point, the major strength of minimum competency testing programs appears to be the identification of specific learning objectives for students, particularly in the elementary grades. In Tennessee, the state Department of Education and the Tennessee Education Association have jointly developed a listing of student expectations in the basic skills kindergarten through grade 6.

The Memphis school system also has developed and circulated among teachers, students and parents a list of specific learning objectives for each of the elementary grades.

The effect of high school graduation tests is unclear. However, it appears that legal and political considerations will likely prevent any massive denial of high school diplomas based on competency test scores.

The full impact upon education also is uncertain at present. One of the major questions is whether an emphasis on basic skills and competency testing will provide improved education for marginal and below average students without limiting the variety and depth of instruction for higher achieving youngsters.

the Journal Times

Racine, Wisconsin OCTOBER 15, 1978

First in a Series

Successful? It all depends on who's talking

ROBERT FRAHM

Robert Frahm has covered education for the Racine *Journal Times* during the past seven years. He is the recipient of a number of journalism awards including five Charles Stuart Mott presentations from the Education Writers Association.

When the Racine School District voted to require its high school students to take competency tests, Frahm chose this form of testing for his study topic. He elected to concentrate the study on districts that had pioneered in the use of competency tests to gage their success, identify problems, and generally determine what could be learned from their experiences.

In this series and his Fellowship report, Frahm offers seven case studies of districts that pioneered in the use of competency tests. He covers such issues as: how high should a minimum be; when are diplomas denied; the effect of tests on curriculum and the academic performance of students.

Mr. Frahm's Fellowship work also appeared in a March 1979 Fastback published by *Phi Delta Kappa*, and in the Spring 1979 *New York Times Education Supplement*.

Journal Times education reporter Robert A. Frahm is on a three-month Ford Fellowship examining competency testing programs in school systems around the United States. Unified School District will move into such testing and standards program in the next few years and has named Earl Nelson, former Giese School principal, as director. This report on the program in Gary, Ind., is the first of Frahm's stories on competency testing in various school systems which will appear in the Journal Times from time to time in the next several weeks.

By Robert A. Frahm
Journal Times Staff

GARY, IND.—Like a rocky, treacherous path, the paragraph loomed before him.

"Can . . . old . . . people . . . do . . . important . . . work? . . ." He treaded slowly, kicking the first words, like small stones, out of his way one at a time. The terrain got rougher.

"At eighty-nine, Michaelangelo painted some of his finest canvasses . . ." the paragraph continued. His voice barely audible, the youth stepped past "*Michaelangelo,*" stumbled on **"painted"** (he said "pointed"), and halted at **"canvasses."**

Teacher Vera Hooper rolled that one out of the way for him. He continued haltingly, wringing his hands under the table, sometimes bobbing his head toward the page, as if to shake a reluctant word off his tongue.

The youth, a 16-year-old sophomore at Lew Wallace High School reads at about a fourth or fifth grade level, said Vera Hooper. He wound up in Hooper's remedial class because he failed a reading test given to all high school students in this steel mill town.

He will take the test again . . . and again . . . if he has to. But if he doesn't pass it eventually, he won't graduate.

THAT is the rule now in Gary, one of the first cities in the country to deny diplomas on the basis of academic tests. Gary schools turned down six 1977 seniors who failed reading or mathematics tests and 16 1978 seniors who failed reading, math, or writing tests. By 1980, seniors also must pass a speech test.

"In the past, they knew they could graduate and not learn anything. The only thing they had to do was show up," said Donald Henderson, an administrative assistant in the 36,000-student district. "We have put a stop to that."

Whether Gary schools have, in fact, stopped turning out incompetent graduates is a matter for debate. The tests themselves, designed by local educators and rated about the sixth grade level, draw some skeptics.

"I DON'T see where they really prepare a child to take his place in the adult world," said Marie Jernigan, chairman of the Gary NAACP's Education Committee. "What is a child qualified to do with 6th grade skills?"

Still, the project is an ambitious one. By one estimate, the program this year will cost $1 million, much of it for remedial teachers and classes at elementary, middle, and high schools. Up to 2,000—one out of four—10th through 12th graders are enrolled in remedial classes, school officials estimate. Tests also are given to second, fifth, and seventh graders.

Starting next June, sixth graders who fail the fifth grade tests, along with seventh graders who fail sixth grade tests will be held back a grade.

All of this, school officials hope, will begin raising achievement in a district where the average senior in 1974 read at a grade level of 8.6 (eighth grade, sixth month) on one national standardized test.

Later results are mixed. Gary seniors hit a 9.8 reading average in 1977, but fell to 9.0 in 1978. The math average jumped from 9.0 in 1974 to 9.6 in 1977, then back to 9.0.

SUCH EVIDENCE is scanty, at best, because the program is so new. But even without solid data, the plan appears to be popular.

Proponents contend Gary's tests motivate slow or lazy students. "They come in and check when the next test is going to be," said Eunice Hobbs, basic skills coordinator at Roosevelt High School. "They say, 'I'm poor in fractions' or 'my punctuation is bad.' You never heard that before."

Students apparently find little difficulty clearing up such problems. Critics point to the small numbers of diplomas denied out of graduating classes of 2,400 students each.

School officials counter by saying failing more students not only would cost more money for remedial classes, but might anger parents.

"IT'S ONE OF the fascinating questions," said Dr. Gordon McAndrew, superintendent of schools. "If you don't fail some students, have you raised the standard? If you fail too many, is it politically acceptable?"

That is not the only question, however. Among others:

In the past, they knew they could graduate and not learn anything. The only thing they had to do was show up. We have put a stop to that.

Donald Henderson
Gary schools administrative assistant

I don't see where they really prepare a child to take his place in the adult world. What is a child qualified to do with sixth grade skills?

Marie Jernigan
Chairman, Gary NAACP Education Committee

● **WILL STUDENTS** view the test as a maximum, not minimum, goal? Said high school reading teacher Daisy Fields: "After the test is over, it's hard to get them to do anything. .It's hard for me to get them to understand they should read for themselves, not for the test."

● **WILL TEACHERS** become obsessed with the test, focusing on it at the expense of other subjects? McAndrew admits there is danger of abuse and said some elementary schools had suspiciously high test scores, but he said the problem does not appear to be serious.

● **WILL GARY GRADUATES** be better prepared for work? Administrators are fond of citing figures showing a 73 percent passing rate last year for seniors taking the U.S. Steel Corp.'s apprenticeship examination, compared with a 42 percent rate in 1971.

What the administrators don't say is that the passing rate was up to 65 percent in 1973, a year before the Gary's competency program was proposed. A U.S. Steel spokesman said there has been no appreciable change in scores since Gary's competency program began.

● **WILL TEST** results be used to rate teachers? Administrators and the Gary Teachers Union insist this won't happen. School Board member Dr. Ruth Taylor doesn't agree. "I think teachers should be under that same microscope," she said.

● **CAN SCHOOLS** legally deny diplomas on the basis of one test? In Gary, no lawsuits — so far. But, said McAndrew, "The first kid who's got a half dozen basketball scholarships waiting (and) who's denied a diploma will create an explosion."

Despite such questions, Gary officials remain enthusiastic and are working on a plan called Competency 2, a project that will require students, starting in 1982, to pass tests in one of five areas — academics, fine arts, business, practical arts, and technical studies.

Even more than the current program, that is likely to prompt a review of curriculum, a process that can be a healthy one.

In the meantime, the tests continue to stir debate.

"You don't even have to be smart, not even average (to pass the test)," said one junior. But a 19-year-old senior, who failed the math test twice, said the remedial course has helped.

"I'm getting pretty good at math," he said. "I'm showing other folks how to do it now."

Chicago teachers say graduatin' ain't easy no more

CHICAGO — The news hit 13-year-old April just as it hit thousands of other eighth graders last spring. "All the rest of my friends were going to ninth grade and I wasn't.

"I felt upset," said April, now 14 and still at McCorkle Elementary School.

From McCorkle in the heart of a South Side ghetto to Ogden School near the Loop to Sauganash School on the wealthy North Side, eighth graders — about 15,000 of them or one of every three — found out their reading scores were too low to allow them into high school.

Unlike April, who had moved to Mississippi during the summer, some of those 15,000 attended summer classes in an effort to raise their scores enough for a ticket to high school. About three out of four succeeded.

Until last spring, Chicago's unofficial policy was to move youngsters to the next level without regard to specific standards, some officials admit.

"NO LONGER does everyone win and everyone get a prize like Alice in Wonderland," said Angeline Caruso, associate superintendent for instructional services.

At the heart of Chicago s new policy is a 1977 Board of Education ruling that requires eighth graders to master 80 percent of 273 reading skills listed in a program called Continuous Progress/Mastery Learning (CPML).

Under CPML, an elementary school does not consider a child to be a third grader or fourth grader, for example, but measures her instead by the number of skills she has mastered. Each of the 273 skills is taught, then measured by a test, and marked on a student's progress chart — a process that some teachers and principals claim results in stacks of paperwork.

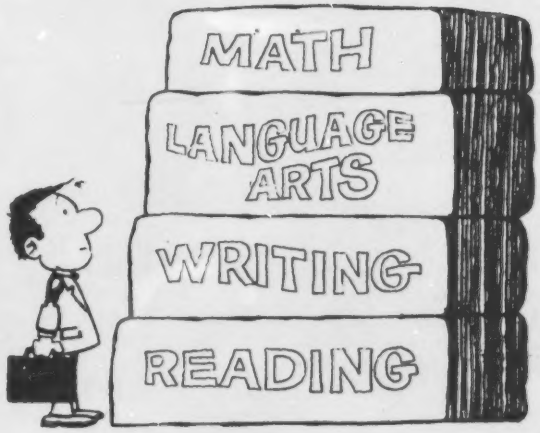
Although CPML was a pilot program here more than a decade ago, a number of schools paid little attention to it until last spring, when the new promotion policy threatened graduation ceremonies.

EIGHTH GRADERS, however, aren't the only ones whose graduation parties might be canceled. Starting next spring, Chicago high school graduates will be required to pass a minimum skills, urban living test that asks them to do such things as read a want ad or interpret a telephone bill.

Officials predict privately that as many as 1,000 of the city's 30,000 graduates might be denied diplomas. "It's going to be bloody," said one.

But the focus in Chicago appears to be on elementary schools.

"You can't just wait until kids get to be seniors and tell them you'll give them a test to see if they graduate," said Caruso. "It's like waiting to tell them they've got terminal cancer."



long before the ultimate step of denying eighth grade diplomas, said Caruso.

OFFICIALS ALSO hope CPML will create tougher, more uniform standards throughout the school system, even in poor neighborhoods.

"Poverty is never an excuse for lack of achievement," said Alice Blair, superintendent of the South Side's District 13, the home of McCorkle School and of the lowest reading scores in the city.

Because of the constant testing and reporting required under CPML, youngsters who have unusual difficulty can be spotted early, perhaps even assigned to special education classes — Blair gained a measure of notoriety herself by holding back low-achieving students even before the systemwide policy was adopted. Blair's approach also includes a demand for parent involvement, strict discipline and dress codes, and constant visits to classrooms by supervisors.

Blair's iron-fisted approach, and perhaps her notoriety, stir at least a trace of resentment among some officials.

"Any stupid administrator can flunk a kid," said Caruso. "The point is, what do you do about him?"

WHAT CHICAGO schools do, said Caruso, is this: They provide additional tutors, put extra reading

> *You can't just wait until kids get to be seniors and tell them you'll give them a test to see if they graduate. It's like waiting to tell them they've got terminal cancer.*
>
> Angeline Caruso
> Associate superintendent/instructional services

teachers in schools whose scores are lowest, keep close track of teaching materials, and provide reading labs at high schools for students who still have low scores even after being held back a year.

The changes already are showing signs of success, said John Wick, director of research for Chicago schools. Wick points to a slight upturn in the city's average reading score for 13-year-olds — from 6.6 (sixth grade, sixth month) in 1975 to 7.1 this year on one national standardized test.

Officials see in the promotion policy a strong element of teacher accountability. Said Caruso: "This makes the best teachers and the worst teachers more visible, and that's good."

WHETHER the promotion policy makes students, teachers, and principals work harder is a question that remains to be answered. There are skeptics.

Failing eighth graders doesn't solve anything, said Billie Paige, a member of the board of the Citizens Schools Committee (CSC), a school watchdog group.

"What they're saying is you're going to make that up in the same school system you failed in. Never does anyone blame the school system."

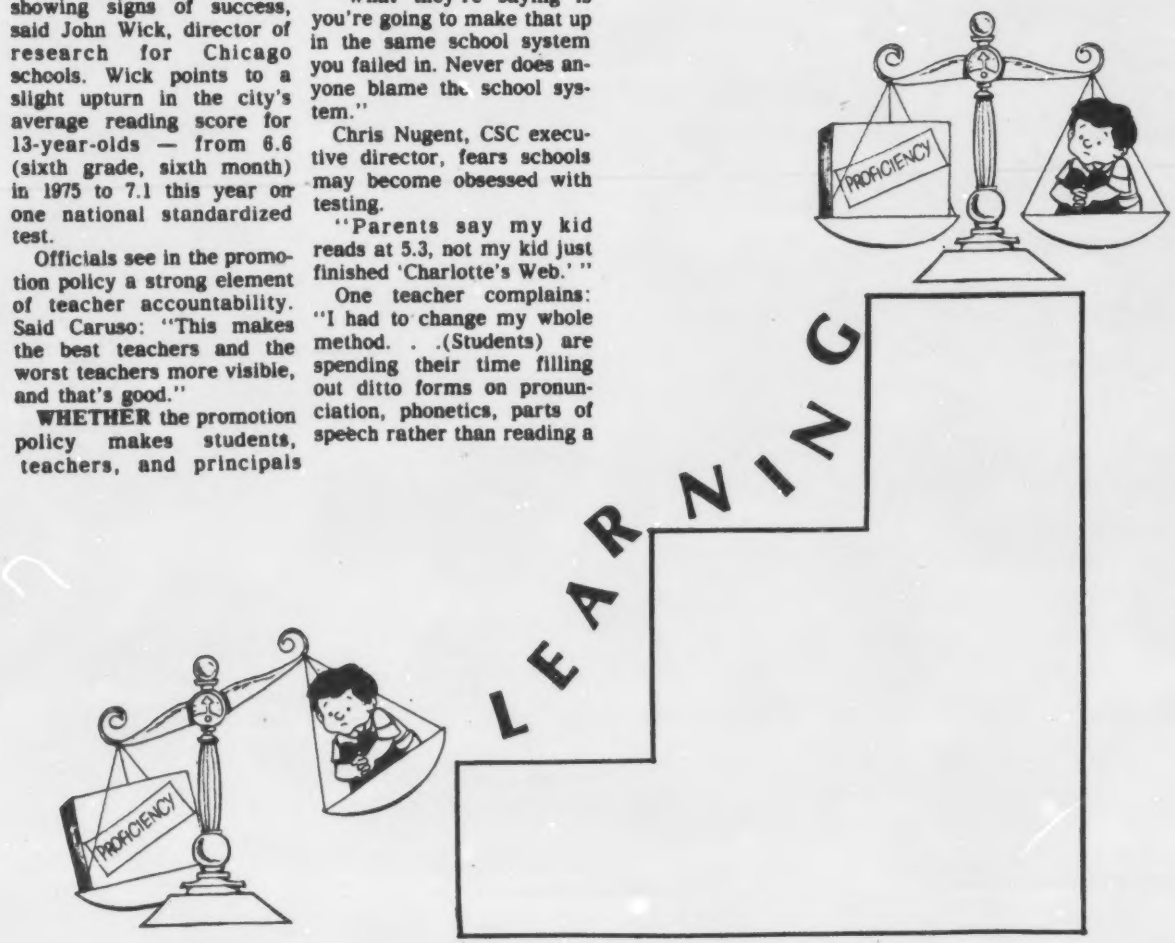
Chris Nugent, CSC executive director, fears schools may become obsessed with testing.

"Parents say my kid reads at 5.3, not my kid just finished 'Charlotte's Web.' "

One teacher complains: "I had to change my whole method. . .(Students) are spending their time filling out ditto forms on pronunciation, phonetics, parts of speech rather than reading a story for enjoyment.

"I don't know whether I'm doing a better job or not. I know I'm filling out a lot of forms."

Still, the promotion policy has won some backers. "I'm the type of person that if you put pressure on me I'll work harder," said another teacher. "It should have been done a long time ago."



Third in a Series

NOVEMBER 12, 1978

Math—heaviest thing on this senior's mind

DENVER — Even though she hopes to sing at graduation, Duronda Williams might find the ceremony an empty one, all because of a mathematics test she hasn't been able to pass so far.

"That's the heaviest thing on your mind," the Thomas Jefferson High School senior said of a graduation requirement that dates back to 1962 — the year of the Cuban missle crisis, John Glenn's orbital spaceflight, and Duronda's second birthday.

In many American schools, basic skills testing arrived recently, but Denver Public Schools boast a program that may be the granddaddy of competency tests, a granddaddy some critics suggest is creaking with age.

Called the Proficiency and Review (P&R) test, the exam began after schools surveyed local businesses in 1958, and businesses complained some graduates couldn't spell, do math, or even fill out sales slips. "We just hopped on the bandwagon earlier

than anyone else," said one school official.

So, after nearly two decades, what have Denver schools learned?

The answer is not clear. Said William Dean, assistant commissioner in the Colorado Department of Education: "Nowhere can I get anyone to tell me so what. . .Maybe it's just institutionalized, and they don't know how to change it."

Administrators in the 68,000-student system defend the P&R, a multiple-choice test covering reading, math, language, and spelling. "No youngster can occupy a chair, bore a teacher to death, get a D-minus, and graduate," said Allan Hosler, supervisor of testing.

Once given only to 12th graders, the test was moved back to 9th grade in the early 1970s, giving students more chances to pass it and allowing more time for remedial help, one benefit of P&R, according to Hosler.

Still, several questions arise.

One of the most frequent is whether the test is too easy. Administrators rate it about an eighth grade level, but some contend it is easier. Only 1.5 to 2 percent of the senior class is denied diplomas each year. "If you can't pass that, you have the IQ of an artichoke," said one senior.

Even so, nearly half last year's ninth graders failed each part of the test after two tries. In the past, the pressure to pass more students led to cheating at some schools, alleges Stirling Cooper, a former researcher who was transfered to a teaching job after he publicly criticized testing practices.

At one high school, "we had evidence someone was erasing answers and putting correct ones in," said Cooper. Officials deny those charges. A self-styled gadfly, Cooper called the test "our primary tool for lying to the public. . .(Schools) use the P&R to say things are in good shape and getting better."

Despite those allegations, the P&R has run into no organized opposition except for an unsuccessful attempt in the Colorado legislature to abolish the test in 1975. That did lead to a law requiring schools to offer immediate remedial help to those who fail competency tests.

Does Denver's test lead to such help?

Consider Duronda Williams. She failed the math test three times, but said she didn't get any help until a tutor got in touch with her this fall.

Although many P&R failures are assigned to remedial or low-level courses, those classes are not directly tied to the P&R, and officials will not guarantee a student who fails the test will wind up there. In fact, Duronda was assigned to three algebra classes in 9th and 10th grades, getting D's in each one. She failed geometry in 11th grade.

State Sen. Regis Groff, D-Denver, author of the 1975 law, said Duronda should have had remedial classes or tutors every semester after she failed the test. "If she hasn't had that, the district is in violation of the law."

At Jefferson, seniors like Duronda get help from tutor Jeannie Lewis. Some schools, however, don't have such tutors, and Lewis said the only instructions she got when she started the job this year came from a secretary. "They've been giving these things for 16 years," she sid. "You'd think they'd have this perfected."

Former Supervisor of Evaluation Gerald Cavanaugh said the P&R forces teachers, from elementary to high school, to reemphasize basic skills. At high schools, computer printouts of test results help pinpoint each student's problems, he said.

"When kids leave here, there are damn few who don't have basic skills."

Still, whether the test helps raise achievement levels in Denver schools remains uncertain. Hosler said there is insufficient data. The latest national standardized test results show a slight decline in 10th grade scores since 1975.

Last spring's sophomores scored roughly at national averages in reading, math, and language tests. But those scores may be inflated because only 70 percent of the class took that national test.

However, said Hosler, the P&R should not be tied to the achievement question. "That wasn't its purpose," he said. "The purpose was to guarantee to business and industry our diploma would have some validity."

So how do business and industry feel?

"They (applicants) have problems even adding a column of figures," said Marcheta Henrich, a recruiter for Mountain Bell, the area's largest employer. She said the company does not even consider whether an applicant has a high school diploma, but gives its own basic skills test. Nearly half of the 1,248 applicants in the latest round of testing failed, she said.

"Most business people have the same problem. . .We are suffering because of the product that's coming to us."

> *If you can't pass that (multiple choice or P&R test), you have the IQ of an artichoke.*
>
> Denver senior

Even though the P&R grew out of a poll of businesses, Denver schools stopped conducting those surveys in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, Denver administrators have acted as competency testing consultants in Oregon, Ohio, South Carolina, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, California, and other states.

Former testing supervisor Cavanaugh offered this advice at a recent conference in Nebraska:

- **MAKE** a trial run. Otherwise, officials might be shocked at the number who fail, he said.
- **START EARLY.** Denver schools, in fact, are devising tests for third and sixth graders.
- **SET ASIDE** money for refresher courses. Neither Cavanaugh nor other officials, however, will estimate what Denver spends.

Denver schools may reap another benefit of the renewed interest in testing. Several publishing companies want to revise Denver's test, originally produced by the California Testing Bureau and later bought by Denver schools. Hosler said the companies hope to sell it, with Denver getting royalties.

"It must have something going for it," said Assistant Superintendent LaRue Belcher, "or we wouldn't have people spend so much money to see us."

Omaha didn't wait for laws to initiate student testing

OMAHA, NEB. — At most schools, graduation means you've spent a few years behind a desk piling up hours and credits. Here at Westside High School, it also means you've answered questions like:

● Which can of Brand Z peaches is the best bargain? A. 6 oz. at 36¢ B. 8 oz. at 42¢ C. 12 oz. at 56¢ D. 24 oz. at $1.20 E. None of these.

Or...

● Express 7/5 as a decimal.

Or...

● True or false? In a democracy you would expect to find: The Lutheran Church is declared by Congress to be an illegal organization.

If you think the questions are easy, most Westside students agree. At this 2,200-student school in an affluent Omaha suburb, about nine out of ten pass most of the tests on their first try.

It is the one student in ten, the poor student, the youngster who is not among the 80 percent here who are headed for college — it is that student who is the focus of the competency tests, said Principal James Tangdall.

"It's a remedial program, and the carrot out there is the diploma. . .It certainly isn't going to help the kid going to the University of Nebraska or Yale or Harvard."

The seeds of the competency test were planted in 1972, before competency testing became a national movement, when a group of Westside teachers and administrators rewrote the school's goals. The group restructured graduation requirements, adding tests in reading, math, writing, speech, consumerism, democratic process, and problem solving.

The tests, given since 1977, apparently have been quietly accepted here, where parents and schools are more likely to haggle about an elementary school textbook censorship controversy or about the free time in student schedules at high school.

Not that there aren't critics. Some say the tests are too easy and don't mean much. "Most minimum competency programs are a publicity stunt," said one teacher. But many observers, including School Board President Robert Berkshire, like them.

"We have a lot of feeling in our district that we're neglecting the basics," he said. "I tell you, there are a lot of people with whom it (testing) strikes a responsive chord."

Why has it won support?

One explanation is that it started locally, said James Findley, Westside assistant principal. "A lot of legislatures, school boards think they can legislate competency . . .We had no pressure from outside. Our program grew from within."

Its chief benefit, Findley said, is the help it offers struggling students. Those who fail the reading test wind up in remedial classes. Failures in a preliminary math test in ninth grade work with a tutor to get ready for the regular math exam in 11th grade.

For the other tests, students may seek help from classroom teachers, homeroom advisers, or aides. No tests are given later than the junior year.

"It's a gut feeling that the bottom 10 percent are leaving this building better prepared than before," Findley said.

Gut feelings aside, Westside has no specific scores on national tests, for instance, to compare students before and after minimum competency programs.

Findley, however, does say the tests have led, for example, to more emphasis on writing and a surge in enrollment in a consumer course.

LaNeta Carlock, a business teacher, said enrollment doubled in the consumer course. "I am appalled the way kids cannot figure the interest they'll be charged or even do a bank statement," she said.

Even so, hardly anyone fails. In two years, out of about 1,600 graduates, only four lost diplomas because of the tests.

"I never got around to taking it," said Mike Mashl, one of those four. Mike returned to finish the tests and later joined the Marines.

Like Mike, most who fail simply put off the tests, said Findley.

Some say the school tries too hard to pass everybody. "It's awfully hard not to pass," said math teacher Roger Hoffman. "You've got teachers hounding you, secretaries hounding you."

His criticism is not the only one. A frequent complaint is that the tests are too easy. The reading test, a commercially-produced exam, is rated about a seventh grade level. The others were developed by Westside teachers and have no specific rating.

"My English teacher told me that — to write the easiest sentences I could think of," sophomore Kim Harms said of the writing test, which requires three related paragraphs of at least four sentences each, with no more than five errors.

"She gave me examples," said Kim, "like 'Dick and Jane ran up the hill,' and said I'd pass as long as the punctuation was right."

Social studies teacher Bill Nelson said students demonstrated more competence by working in the fall political campaign than by taking the democratic process test, a true-false quiz. "I would not think for a minute our test shows these kids will operate at a minimum level."

Findley himself worries about the speech test, an oral exam administered individually by 130 homeroom advisers. "It's a farce," said one adviser. "I haven't flunked anyone yet."

Still, many teachers support the tests, although most insist the tests are not Westside's prime goal and will not overshadow the rest of the curriculum.

Even School Superintendent Vaughn Phelps agreed: "We don't think it's such a big deal."

For some students, it is. "It may take me another 30 or 40 times," said a junior who claimed he has failed the writing test seven times. One senior, who passed the writing test on his third try, said he hurried through the first two times.

What tripped him up?

"Spelling," he said, "punctuation, and I think capitalism."

Fifth in a Series

DECEMBER 11, 1978

Ready to graduate? Committee will vote on it

ST. PAUL — While students in other cities hurdled paper and pencil tests on their way to graduation, David Samuelson collected letters, testimonies, and even telegrams. Some samples:

- A Boy Scout leader wrote that Dave planned menus and bought food for camping trips and earned cooking and camping merit badges.
- "In three years he has progressed from a beginning dancer to one of a high level of proficiency," wrote an official of The Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis.
- A drama teacher cited Dave's leadership and listed several plays in which Dave took part as an actor or director.

In all, Dave collected 30 pages of testimony from teachers, employers, and even his parents as part of a graduation requirement at the St. Paul Open School, where officials scoff at the tests becoming popular as graduation requirements elsewhere.

"We simply don't believe tests show much," said David Evertz, an information officer and teacher at the Open School.

Dave Samuelson and his classmates took only a handful of tests during their high school days and received no grades or credits for the courses they took. Instead, they found ways to demonstrate competence in six areas: Career education, community involvement and current issues, consumer awareness, cultural awareness, information finding, and personal and interpersonal skills.

Unlike seniors elsewhere, many of whom joke about the low level of minimum competency tests at their schools, seniors at the Open School appear to take their requirements seriously.

"I don't think you'll find anyone here who considers them a joke," said Evertz. Samuelson concurred: "I think it's harder, I think it's tougher, and that's good."

Under the Open School plan, each senior selects a graduation committee including a counselor, student advisor, a 10th grade student, and another person of the senior's choice. The committee reviews the student's plans and eventually decides whether to recommends the student for graduation.

"It's a struggle for some of them," said Evertz. Usually, he said, two or three of about 40 seniors each year don't make it. That is a higher percentage of failure than in school systems like Omaha, Denver, or Gary, Ind., where paper and pencil exams are used.

Some Open School supporters said paper and pencil tests just won't do what parents and taxpayers around the country hope they will — that is, guarantee students can function competently after graduation.

"They (parents) are not getting what they're being told they're getting," said Wayne Jennings, former Open School principal. "We call it consumer fraud. . .I think it's a short-lived fad, a not very thoughtful approach to the complicated process of learning."

At the Open School, said Jennings, emphasis was placed on community involvement. "We didn't confine education to just books and classroom settings. I've always believed education should be defined as the development of competencies needed for life in a complex society."

The attempts to focus strictly on the Three R's, he said, are "a myopic way of looking at education. Today, people are calling on people to do a lot more than that. . .

"We ought to work more on developing responsibility, initiative, perseverance, enthusiasm, ability to make decisions."

Another problem with most paper and pencil graduation exams is their low level, usually seventh or eighth grade material, said Joe Nathan, also a former administrator at the Open School.

"People will say they're paying for 12 years of education and getting seven or eight. . .I don't think it's going to increase the public's confidence."

Confidence in the Open School's requirements was not a problem for Ellen Scher, along with Samuelson a member of the 1977 graduating class.

"I'm personally very proud of my graduation packet," said the 19-year-old, who included as part of her packet an account of her experiences as an exchange student in Mexico.

"I don't think students who go through a regular high school are ever held accountable for evaluating their own education, she said. "Here, you demand that a student look at education as an individual thing, not as a matter of I got six credits like everyone else did."

One parent, Dr. Robert Bjornson, was so impressed with his son's graduation packet that he made a copy of it. "When I graduated from high school," said Bjornson, "the trick was just to continue to breathe till the last day."

Sixth in a Series

Dial phone? Take shower? It's part of competency

SALEM, ORE. — Wait a minute. Wasn't this where it all got started?

Wasn't this the place that rocked the education industry by telling high schoolers they had to prove their competence by passing skill tests, that just sitting at a desk wasn't good enough anymore?

Six years ago, wasn't Oregon the spark that set the competency testing brush fire that now smolders in 36 states?

But just look around:

● **IN ALBANY,** officials cut the number of competency skills from 165 to 92 after parents and teachers complained about them, including one that required physical education teachers to record the number of showers each student took.

● **IN EUGENE,** schools once required more than 200 competencies, but now list only 17. "It was just impossible," said one assistant principal, who still dislikes the idea, but says, "We'll play the damn game."

● **IN LINCOLN COUNTY,** schools list 243 minimum skills, including such things as the ability to list five jobs related to dance, "identify (your) parents' occupations," and "demonstrate a positive concept of self-worth."

What is all of this?

"It's such a simple concept, and yet it caused a lot of trouble," said W.R. "Bus" Nance, graduation requirements specialist with the Oregon Department of Education in Salem. "In the beginning, no one knew what it was."

What it was, was a 1972 State Board of Education ruling on graduation standards, requiring students to demonstrate competence in reading, listening, speaking, writing, analyzing, and computing.

By 1978, when the first class graduated under the new rules, the state's 300-plus school districts had nearly that many different programs, some simple, some mind-boggling.

"SOME HAVE as few as nine (competence requirements) and others up to 300," said State Sen. Clifford Trow, D-Corvallis, who chaired task force hearings last year where administrators, teachers, and citizens testified, often contending the competencies were trivial, time-consuming, and a paperwork nightmare.

"A lot of us believe the whole program was a public relations thing," said Trow, whose task force eventually recommended sweeping changes, saying it had serious reservations about using competencies as graduation requirements.

Whatever the problems, competency testing is here, and schools are coming up with results as different as those in Parkrose and Albany, for instance.

In Parkrose, a Portland suburb, "We viewed it as an opportunity to get our act together," said Clarence Mershon, graduation requirements director. According to Nance, the 4,200-student district "moved faster, further, better than any district in the state."

What makes Parkrose stand out? For one thing, it focuses its competency plan on junior high schools. By the time they get out of junior high, most students have passed competencies like spelling, writing, or math. "Why wait until high school to find out?" said Bob Frantz, a principal at Heights Junior High.

There is another advantage, said Mershon. "Some districts set the reading level at sixth grade and then test 11th or 12th graders, which is not good public relations."

PERHAPS PARKROSE'S most critical step, however, was the re-examination of curriculum from kindergarten through 12th grade. The review resulted in more specific course goals and extensive testing all the way down through elementary grades, said Mershon.

"We had an era in the '60s and '70s where teachers were isolated in their classrooms doing whatever they damn well pleased without much direction." Said junior high English teacher Don Reed: "No one ever told me exactly what I was going to teach prior to this."

Teachers are among the plan's backers, and one reason is that they helped write not only course goals, but competency requirements as well.

"I think it's reasonable to assume a kid should be able to write four paragraphs when he gets out of school," said Tim Gillespie, director of an alternative program for unmotivated students.

Not that there aren't critics. Jeanne Paul, a member of a Parkrose High School citizens group, said her 11th grade

son "still writes very badly, and yet he's been passed out of writing. He neither punctuates nor spells correctly, and I'm protesting."

SUCH PROTESTS seem mild compared with the ones heard in Albany. Listen:

"It (competency testing) gives education a really bad name," said Bob Monson, an English teacher at West Albany High School. "Kids are universally aware the damn things are silly. They've come to the point where they're going through the motions like everyone else."

Others, including some parents in the 4,000-student grade 7-12 district, echo his criticism. Why?

The answer may lie in the district's original list of 165 competencies. Among other things, it required students to:

- **READ** a clock, **READ** a calendar, **USE** the mail, and **USE** a telephone.
- **"RECOGNIZE** nonverbal expressions." One teacher said students might be asked "to look at the ceiling, roll their eyes, and sigh" in mock annoyance.
- **"MAINTAIN** personal cleanliness," a goal students met by taking showers 80 percent of the time after physical education class. "The teacher had to check them off as they came out of the shower," said one principal.

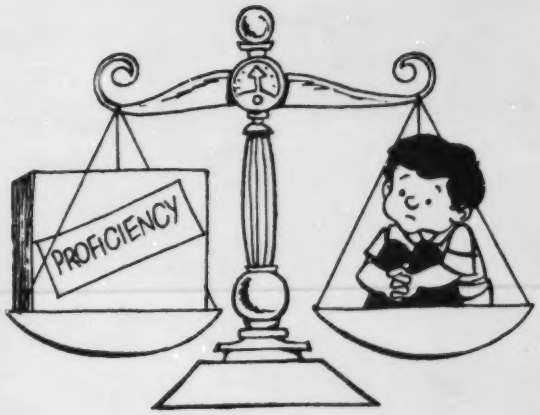
Although those requirements were dropped, even the new list raises eyebrows. For Competency No. 45, for example, students must identify eight of ten parts on a diagram of the human body. "I don't know if it does any kid in the world any good to know where his pituitary gland is," said an aide who gives the test.

Despite such criticism, the district defends its revised competency plan, saying it has led to clearer classroom goals, better evaluation, and more remedial classes for slow students.

"I think (competencies) address the problem of the kid who doesn't aspire to higher education better than anything we've come up with so far," said Assistant Superintendent Robert Stalick.

SOME BACKERS believe the criticism will subside once the current crop of junior high students reaches high school. Like Parkrose, Albany requires many of its competencies at junior high school.

But not Albany, not Parkrose, not even the State of Oregon has gathered much evidence on whether competency testing works. Little data exists anywhere on how students performed prior to competency testing, said Gordon Ascher, associate superintendent with the state department.



"We never said what problems the program is intended to cure."

Whether it cures graduates is in question; whether it denies them diplomas is not. Hardly anybody fails. Albany, for instance, failed none of its 550 graduates on competency tests, Parkrose only one of its 379.

What is the future of competency testing in Oregon?

State officials are considering cutting back some of the additional requirements scheduled to start in 1981, requirements including competence in health, citizenship, science, environment, consumerism, highway safety, and career education.

IN ADDITION, State Superintendent Verne Duncan has suggested setting specific goals in reading, writing, and math at elementary schools.

Critics and supporters alike agree that the setting of clear classroom goals is healthy. "You can walk into a classroom and say to any teacher, 'What are you doing in this course?' " said Robert Gourley of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland. "That's got to make a difference."

But Oregon's plan has left a trail of programs covering everything from pituitary glands to showers.

"The competencies are a good idea, but more thought was needed," said John Porter, a senior at South Albany High School. "When I was a sophomore I had to be able to dial a telephone. That's ridiculous."

Seventh in a Series

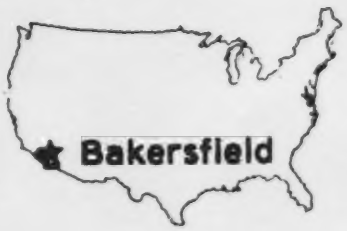
DECEMBER 28, 1978

Competency testing didn't raise Bakersfield scores

BAKERSFIELD, CALIF. — In many cities where high schoolers must pass graduation skill tests, nobody is conducting research to find out whether the tests do any good.

That leads skeptics to wonder whether those graduates really do any better in reading, writing, and math.

But here in this Central California oil and farming community, where



schools got a head start requiring graduation competency tests, officials did study test data. The result: Officials wonder whether graduates really do any better in reading, writing, and math.

"There's a good possibility this whole minimum competency thing, if ever thoroughly assessed, would prove we really can't teach anything," said James Fillbrandt, princi-

pal of Bakersfield High School.

RESEARCHERS found seniors under competency requirements did no better on the tests, or even did slightly worse, than earlier groups not under the requirements.

"We were very disappointed," said former reading consultant CeCelia Algra.

In light of the evidence, will schools here continue the $75,000-a-year program?

The question is moot. A 1976 California law requires local districts to establish such programs by 1980. The Kern High School District, an 18,000-student district of 12 high schools plus alternative centers, got started in 1971 with school board action.

In addition to its early start, two other things set the program apart: First, schools tested workers in local businesses to help determine passing scores; second, officials agreed to study competency test data to see whether the program worked.

THE MATH TEST became a requirement for 1976 seniors, the reading test for 1977 seniors. A writing test will be required of 1981 graduates. All tests first are given to freshmen.

"We were picking up the vibes," said Algra, now a counselor at Bakersfield High. "People were complaining kids were getting out of high school and weren't able to read; do simple math."

The plan blossomed under the 42-year-old Fillbrandt, a boyish-looking former research director, who, ironically, takes an iconoclastic view of the nation's competency testing movement. "From the learning side, it's nothing, it's garbage, it's no better than anything else." But Fillbrandt, who once opposed even the Kern proposal, admits he underestimated the idea's public appeal.

"This idea had tremendous potential politically. This is what the people wanted. It had the Three R's with a screaming vengeance," he said.

One apparently popular step was the decision to give the reading and math tests to local workers. The district gave the tests to 300 clerks, secretaries, nurses' aides, firefighters, machine operators — workers in jobs requiring some reading and math

skills, said Algra. "We actually tested it with people these kids are going to have to compete with."

BILLIE WARD, a 58-year-old grandmother and a buyer in the cosmetics department of a local drug store, was one of those tested. "I think it's great, I really do.

"I don't think kids are being taught properly. We have quite a few high school kids working here. Some of them can't even make change."

Her contention is hardly surprising in light of what the Kern District found. For example, on the math competency test, only 31 percent of this year's freshmen could find area and perimeter, 52 percent subtract decimals, and 57 percent measure a line.

Because they are allowed to pass the 15 math objectives one at a time, most students meet the requirement eventually. In fact, out of 3,500 seniors last spring, fewer than 20 were denied diplomas because of competencies, the district estimates.

However, when schools retested samples of seniors in experiments during 1976 and 1977, only one in ten passed all 15 objectives. The average senior passed 10.

EVEN MORE disturbing was the fact that classes not under the requirements did just as well, not only in math, but reading. In fact, the average senior in 1975 passed 10.2 math objectives, compared with 10.2 in 1976, 9.9 in 1977, and 9.8 in 1978. On the reading exam, the average 1976 senior answered 24 of 30 test questions correctly, compared with 23.2 in 1977 and 23.8 in 1978.

"I can't get anybody in the district to take up the idea why those scores aren't improving," said Fillbrandt. "Nobody wants to touch it."

The belief that minimum competency programs help students learn is just one misunderstanding in a movement fraught with myths, contends Fillbrandt. "The whole thing has the potential for some very silly people to develop programs, and they will be a farce, a damn joke. . .

"(Another) possibility, the most dangerous of all, is that people will treat this as saintly, as a panacea, and start wrenching thier entire school program around it."

But, Fillbrandt urges, don't get him wrong.

"WE'RE NOT CHANGING anything in terms of learning, but I'm glad we're doing what we're doing," he said. Others agree that new remedial math and reading courses, better identification of slow students, and clearer course goals are benefits of the Kern program.

"Students realize high school graduation is more than social passing," said Bakersfield High reading teacher Thelma Chapman. Said freshman Barbara Garcia: "If you want the title of high school graduate, you should also have the knowledge of one. . .You can't just graduate and know nothing."

But there are critics, too, some of whom say the tests are too easy. "The things on the test were things I learned in fourth grade," said senior Kellie Myers. "What's the point?"

West High School math teacher Dorothy Wood, who designed the math competency test, said, "I can't see that it makes a difference. What makes a difference is when you have a teacher in a classroom, and you close the door and teach."

WOOD HOPES Kern schools will continue to study test data. She contends educators in most places have been afraid to study the product of competency testing. "Everybody assumes it will do some good, but suppose it doesn't? That's too horrible to think about," she said. "We put too much of our ego into the thing."

Debbie wants out— competency test keeps her in

None too optimistic about her prospects, Debbie Dean nonetheless shows up early at lecture hall 116, grabs a seat in the front row, and waits for directions she has heard before.

"Where it says 'course,' put down consumerism," says a teacher's aide. "Consumerism — c-o-n-s-u-m-e-r-i-s-m."

"I've taken it five times," says Debbie, a 17-year-old senior at Westside High School in Omaha, Neb. "I just can't learn it. I want to graduate at semester. I want out."

Before she gets out, however, Debbie, like students in cities such as Chicago, Denver, Gary, Ind., or Bakersfield, Calif., faces something that is becoming a familiar graduation requirement, the minimum competency test.

FACED with mounting criticism of graduates, schools are demanding that students demonstrate they can do such things as balance a checkbook, solve simple math problems, write a paragraph, or read at a sixth grade level.

As reasonable as that may sound (Who would argue a graduate shouldn't be competent?), the idea raises questions that could trouble schools as much as the consumer exam troubles Debbie Dean.

In fact, minimum competency testing already has led to lawsuits in Florida and North Carolina. Elsewhere it stirs debate between ardent backers and hard-line critics.

Critics and supporters alike, however, apparently agree on the sources of the competency trend. It comes in the wake of rising school costs, reports of declines in student achievement, and public criticism of high school graduates. Thirty-six states now require minimum competency standards in some form. In addition, various local districts have set their own standards.

The trend signals a loss of faith in schools, said George Weber, associate director of the Council for Basic Education in Washington, D.C. "You can't assume a person who got a passing grade in a math course can do math," he said. "In other words, we have schools without standards."

IF SO, is competency testing the answer?

Skeptics abound. Said Arthur Wise of the Rand Corporation in Washington, D.C.: "I would grant education has become somewhat soft in recent years, but I think we are well on the way to repairing the softness without competency testing. . .It's like a cheap fix."

With most states not scheduled to start competency programs until the 1980s, educators have turned to some of the early starters — Gary, Denver, Bakersfield, Omaha, Oregon — for hints on the future of the movement. But even in those places the evidence is skimpy, and questions remain.

FIRST, WHAT IS COMPETENCE?

In Gary, Denver, and Bakersfield, competence means passing reading, writing, and math tests, but in Lincoln County, Ore., it means passing 243 skills, including naming five jobs related to dance or identifying your parents' occupations.

In Florida, it means passing a state test in applying communication and math to everday problems. In St. Paul, Minn., it means collecting letters and other testimony about competence in real-life situations like finding a job.

Some critics suggest schools delude themselves by trying to identify what skills are required to function competently. "Can anybody say, indeed, that skills of this level are what are required to be a truck driver or engineer?" said Gene Glass, a University of Colorado researcher.

SECOND, HOW HIGH SHOULD A MINIMUM BE?

Gordon McAndrew, superintendent of schools in Gary, sums up the dilemma: "If you don't fail some students, have you raised the standard? If you fail too many, is it politically acceptable?"

Neither Gary nor anyone else has denied many diplomas so far. Gary schools, for example, rejected 22 seniors out of about 4,800 graduates in 1977 and 1978.

Many competency tests are rated about a sixth or seventh grade level, prompting skeptics to contend they are too easy. Joe Nathan, a former official at the St. Paul Open School, contends that the low standards could backfire. "People will say they're paying for 12 years of education and getting seven or eight."

THIRD, IS COMPETENCY TESTING LEGAL?

The Florida and North Carolina lawsuits are the only ones so far, but experts think others are likely. In Tampa, ten black students contend the test examines skills they were never taught, is not a reliable instrument, and unfairly penalizes black students who spent earlier years in segregated schools.

FOURTH, HOW DOES COMPETENCY TESTING AFFECT CURRICULUM?

The answer remains unclear, although critics like the Rand Corporation's Wise fear statewide tests could lead schools to teach for basic skills only, thereby sacrificing things like science, history, or music. "What you do is cause local school people to become obsessed with the test," he said.

Teachers often make another complaint: Competency testing produces mountains of paperwork and takes too much time. "It's a testing program, not a learning tool," said a Parkrose, Ore., social studies teacher. "All our effort goes into pushing them over that hurdle. . .We haven't changed teaching techniques, introduced any new theories, provided any new avenues for students to pick up skills."

FINALLY, DOES COMPETENCY TESTING IMPROVE SCHOOLS?

"I don't think there is any doubt about it. The answer is 'yes,' " say backers like the Council for Basic Education's Weber. On the other side are skeptics like the University of Colorado's Glass: "They (competency tests) are of no value at all to teachers, no value to kids."

But what evidence is there?

Solid research is scarce. Some schools have incomplete data; others have none.

In Denver, where the Proficiency and Review (P&R) test has been given for 16 years, officials have done no research on whether the tests improve the caliber of high schoolers. And even though the P&R grew out of a 1958 survey that found local businesses dissatisfied with the caliber of

graduates, Denver schools stopped conducting such surveys in the early 1960s.

Oregon, the first state to venture into competency testing, also has little data, according to Gordon Ascher, associate superintendent in the Oregon Department of Education. "Nobody bothered a few years back to set up an evaluation design," he said.

ONE DISTRICT, Kern County, Calif., Schools, gave its reading and math tests to samples of seniors both before and after competency testing began. The result: Seniors under the new requirements scored either the same as or slightly lower than those not under the requirement.

One of the most common arguments favoring competency testing is that it identifies students who need help. But Margaret Silberberg, a Minneapolis psychologist who has studied research on remedial reading, raises a troubling point: "We have no evidence at all (that) remediation helps."

Although students made short-term gains, she said, "when we'd go back six months later we found they were right back where they started."

Still, remedial work is "the great hidden cost in competency-based programs," according to a National Institute of Education (NIE) study by Barry Anderson of Washington University in St. Louis.

CRITICS AND SUPPORTERS alike agree that competency testing has one beneficial effect: It forces schools to look at what they have been doing. Before, said one NIE researcher, "You could go into classroom after classroom and not discover what it is teachers are teaching, or why."

However, if educators and citizens do examine their schools, they will find nothing terribly simple about them, not even the assumption that undergirds the competency movement — that student skills are declining.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) gives a mixed picture. In a 1974 writing survey and a 1975 reading survey, it showed that 13-and 17-year-old students wrote worse paragraphs and made less accurate inferences from what they read than did their predecessors four years earlier.

However, nine-year-olds in the same surveys improved in both reading and writing. In addition, 13-and 17-year-olds did no worse on "literal comprehension" skills in 1975 than 1971, and 17-year-olds actually improved their scores on NAEP's functional literacy test.

"It's a complex issue," said NAEP Director Roy Forbes, "and people looking for simple answers don't like to hear the complex questions."

The Exchange

A Journal of Native American-Philanthropic News

Washington, D.C. FALL, 1978

Conference Report

National Congress of American Indians Rapid City, South Dakota; National Indian Education Association, Niagara Falls, New York.

Two largest annual Indian conferences decide policy mandates for their concerns in 1979.

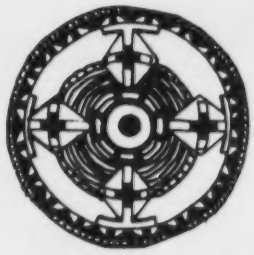
By Gary Fife

GARY FIFE, Creek-Cherokee, is presently conducting research and reporting on Indian education under a Ford Foundation Fellowship. He is the Legislative and Public Information Specialist of the United Indian Planners Association (UIPA), a national organization of Indian planners.

In six years as a reporter for a variety of Indian organizations, Gary Fife, covered education and other issues affecting American Indians.

At the time of the Fellowship he was concerned about the effect inclusion of BIA education programs in a new Department of Education would have on Indian education. He proposed a study program that would assess the impact of such a department on tribal groups around the country.

When BIA education programs were excluded from the proposed Education Department, Fife revised his study to concentrate on major changes Indian education leaders hoped for within the BIA administrative structure. The following articles contain reports on directions recommended by a number of leading Indian educators.



The future of Indian affairs remains in doubt, according to the nation's two largest American Indian organizations, the National

Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

In early Fall conventions, both "umbrella" groups reaffirmed earlier congressional testimony that the Carter Administration is attempting to reduce the federal responsibility for Indian affairs by diminishing its Constitutionally-mandated obligation to Indians to a mere agency-level function similar to that of other minority advocacy programs.

Indian tribes are "waging a war of survival," according to Veronica Murdock, President of NCAI, in her address to the group's 35th Annual Convention held in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The U. S.'s oldest and largest Indian organization convened September 18-22 to develop position papers and strategies to prevent diminution of tribal sovereignty, protect Indian natural resources, fight Congressional "backlash," and promote further tribal self-determination amidst a wavering Carter Administration attitude on Indian affairs.

A Congressional "cooling-off" and a number of recent damaging court decisions also presented Indian tribes with serious challenges in the forms of "anti-Indian" legislation, an undefined Executive Branch policy, and an unfavorable judicial climate for tribal government, said Murdock.

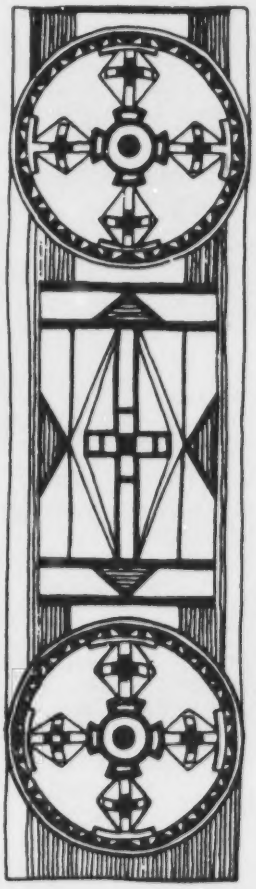
As the national group prepared to battle what it termed "piecemeal" efforts to reduce the federal responsibility for Indian affairs, its chief concerns over water rights, education, litigation, legislation, etc., were addressed by panels functioning much like Congressional committees. These committees identified issues of general and specific importance in the field, submitting policy recommendations to the voting tribal delegates of the general assembly.

A landmark national Indian water rights policy was produced and accepted unanimously. The resolution featured 11 sections defining Indian water rights to counter the anticipated introduction of a Washington State-sponsored bill to quantify Indian and all federally-reserved water rights. This measure would subordinate Indian treaty rights and efforts toward economic development to state control.

In summary, the NCAI policy would:

- mandate tribal consultation and consent for federal policy that would affect Indian Winters Doctrine water rights;
- provide for the protection of Indian interests by calling for participation in national and regional water usage commissions;
- generate adequate funding for Indian legal counsel; and
- force the federal agencies of the Department of Justice and the Solicitor's Office in Interior to rescind from any position that conflicts with the position of the tribe affected.

In conclusion, the policy stated: "Quantification of Indian Winters Doctrine rights is neither necessary nor desirable at this time. A final determination, made at any given date, is inconsistent with the *open-endedness* [sic] of the right itself." (emphasis added)



Of equal importance was the policy developed by the Education Concerns Committee. Indian tribes, it said, fear further reduction of federal responsibility for Indians. Carter Administration attempts to consoli-

date federal education programs in a proposed Cabinet-level Department of Education, transferring Indian education programs from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is as harmful a step as the earlier removal of Indian health services from BIA to the Public Health Service in HEW.

The resolution stated in part: ". . . the current legislative trend indicates that bills such as S. 991 are being proposed and directed at the BIA in an effort to fragment or dismantle the BIA by transferring various BIA services to other federal agencies serving a similar function on behalf of all U. S. citizens."

The accompanying background issue paper declared that in spite of the BIA's history of mismanagement of Indian education programs, tribes would rather see reform within it, instead of transfer and "fragmentation."

The Convention voiced its earlier Congressional stance, again urging protection of tribal trust status, Indian preference in hiring and Indian self-determination guarantees.

As the Convention neared adjournment, the delegates selected new leadership for the organization. Andrew Ebona, Tlingit from Alaska, was chosen executive director replacing interim director, Albert Trimble. Ebona, 35, is former executive director of the United Indian Planners Association (UIPA).

Three new Area Vice-Presidents were also elected: Clifford Black, Eskimo, Alaska Area; Vernon Bellecourt, White Earth Chippewa, Minneapolis Area, and Harry Gilmour, Quapaw, Muskogee Area. The election of Bellecourt was notable in that his active leadership in the American Indian Movement (AIM) makes him the first "militant" to serve in an elected capacity with NCAI.

The 10th Annual Convention of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) met October 9-12 in Niagara Falls, N.Y. to focus on the future of Indian education and specifically the status of BIA programs in the aftermath of an 11th-hour Senatorial deletion of the transfer of BIA programs from Interior (see LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS).

Their declaration echoed, almost verbatim, the concerns of NCAI's Education Concerns Committee, but additionally addressed apprehensions surrounding placement of the Office of Indian Education of the Department of HEW.

In a unanimously-approved resolution, the NIEA membership went on record as supporting tribal opposition to any efforts of Congressional representatives or the Administration to move Indian education from the BIA. Recalling President Carter's campaign promise to consult with Indian tribes "in the tribal council chambers . . . and not in Washington, D. C.," the statement cautioned, however, that: "Opposition to the transfer does not indicate support of the BIA as it is now."

The NIEA action plan called for research into the President's administrative authority to transfer BIA's programs after the Cabinet-level department is created legislatively. It also urged additional study of appropriate legal resource if the White House makes such a move.

For those non-BIA programs that would be transferred to the proposed department, NIEA resolved to support efforts to guarantee basic concerns of tribal trust status protection, Indian preference in hiring practices, Indian self-determination, and further contracting opportunities.

The recommendations also called for development of a comprehensive plan and policy for Indian education in the proposed department, that eligibility criteria be limited to "American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Alaskan Natives," that current non-BIA programs maintain their definition of "Indian" in the new department, and that no tribe or Indian organization now receiving federal funds will lose funds due to passage of the Act.

The Office of Indian Education, HEW, has been the most effective in providing Indians with realistic local alternatives to federally-directed educational programs, but, according to its director, its role in the proposed department is unclear.

In providing NIEA with a prediction of Congressional action, OIE Director, Dr. Gerald Gipp, Standing Rock Sioux, forecast that Congress was moving toward examination of Indian-run programs and analyzing results. He said that all emotional arguments for Indian program support had been exhausted and Congressional oversight committees "now wanted to know what they were getting for their money."

Gipp advised that Indian programs must "systematize" and document information to present to appropriations committees on Capitol Hill to insure future funding levels for OIE and Indian programs. He added that such documentation would reveal the impact of Indian-designed educational programs and that a Secretarial-level review of Indian programs must reflect effective use of funds.

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ntca indian education

Gerard Interviewed on New BIA Education Director

Gary Fife (Creek-Cherokee), a former Ford Fellow in Education in a recent interview with Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Forrest Gerard, recorded his candid comments on recently appointed director of Indian Education at the Bureau of Indian Affairs-- Earl Barlow.

"He's been in professional Indian education work all of his life. He was a former classroom teacher in public schools in northwestern Montana, serving Flathead and then later, as a public school administrator in Montana."

Barlow obtained his master's in education and joined the state department of public instruction, heading the department of Indian education.

"One of the significant accomplishments of his tenure," Gerard said, "was that he converted the use of Johnson-O'Malley funds in that state from operational support to supplemental use. He was instrumental in getting parental committees established even before the amendment in Title II in P.L. 93-638."

"He later accepted the position of the superintendent of public schools on the Blackfeet reservation. It was always his intention that someday he wanted to go back there and try and turn that school district around. It's the largest Indian public school district in the State of Montana, over 90% Indian enrollment. Earl's view was that there was sufficient federal funding from the various federal sources in that system, but what was needed was a revision of the curriculum, stabilizing the faculty, the whole physical plant. I believe to that end, Earl has achieved phenomenal success. I believe he's widely recognized by his peers throughout the Indian education world and our view, he represents an outstanding person for the post."

Gerard mentioned that, "We looked over, maybe, a half a dozen individuals in the field before we narrowed it down to him."

When questioned about the last decade's attrition rate in the position at the education division, Gerard responded, "I think you've put your finger on some of the real fundamental problems in that bureau. The prolonged period in which acting people heading up the bureau prevented them from addressing some of the real issues in the trust area, trying to attack some of the public administration problems in education."

"The prolonged period in which it was an acting person has not helped us. I believe that Earl (Barlow) is that kind of professional who will be able to fit in and start bringing some stability to the education field in BIA."

Gerard then discussed recently-enacted legislation mandating several reforms in the BIA education system.

"I think that Title XI, coupled with some of the tough management improvement efforts that we have underway, will fit in very well."

However, Gerard had reservations about the total scope of Title XI of the former H.R. 15 education legislation.

"I had some serious misgivings about the direct line authority question. That's going to be a little tricky, but I view many of the other provisions as very useful in bringing about criteria, standards, and no one should argue against that. I think all of that will help strengthen Indian education."

In reply to questions on the "tricky" part of the direct line authority question, Gerard said, "It sort of gives you a 'bureau within a bureau', if you see what I'm getting at. It's going to be an interesting public administration challenge to see how we work that out."

Gerard continued, "We have a very ambitious plan in moving forward quickly on H.R. 15. I think that most people who have become aware of it are reasonably impressed that we are truly seeking input from a wide range of the Indian community. A lot of the Bureau staff who want change feel encouraged about the way in which we are approaching it. With the tight time frame, we're going to be handled out of my office. Over a two to three year period, there's a lot of work that must be accomplished."

Gerard cautioned, "I don't want to give any false expectations, but I would hope that within a year that we are going to be seeing some re-direction of things. We propose to take some steps soon on the off-reservation boarding schools. I want Barlow to begin thinking about some kind of 'blue-ribbon' panel to take a real hard look at those schools."

The BIA boarding school enrollment has dropped approximately 9,000 students over the last ten years. The construction of schools closer to home has helped alleviate the situation, Gerard said, but he conceded that BIA still had an enormous backlog of projects that had not been addressed.

In mentioning the boarding school's various problems, Gerard spoke of problems inherent in the student populations.

"The thing that bothers me is that we know that many students in the boarding schools are public school drop-outs, serious psychological and behaviorial problems, through no fault of their own. Maybe, the next stop would be a state institution, and in effect, what the Bureau is serving in terms of those students in many instances, is an alternative school and amazingly, they're moving some of those students through to graduation."

"On the other hand," he continued, "We have such unfortunate situations such as Chilocco, where we've had a couple of brutal murders. Let's face up to the realities of what we've been dealing with there. I think that this has been one of the bureau's problems over the years. They've let themselves be set up and have never taken the initiative and said, "Look, here's what we're dealing with; we need a school, a facility and a program to deal with these children."

"We're putting behaviorial problem students under the guise of a normal boarding school operation...then we're paying the price with the problems and trauma that emerges from that."

The Assistant Secretary warned that funding would present a problem. "It's no secret that the Administration's going for a lean budget for the 1980 fiscal year. It seems to me that if we justify the need for this kind of facility, it's going to be our burden, together with the Indian community and the Congress is also going to have to face up to this."

He continued, "If we separated out those kinds of students and say let's put them in a separate program and facility that would be more fitting, then we're all going to have to carry the burden and try to get the funding for it."

In discussing the forecast for the upcoming legislative calendar, Gerard was unsure as to what to expect from the White House. He said that President Carter was expected to reintroduce the Department of Education bill, but could not elaborate as to whether the bill would contain the BIA education transfer provisions.

"I've not been consulted on this directly, but I understand that he might send that bill up in the State of the Union message."

Gerard said that he would repeat his stance for the BIA during the discussion of the Department of Education bill within Interior.

"I think that the message was clear from the Indian community and the Congress that they supported the Indian community's desires that the transfer not take place. I know what my recommendation is going to be, and not based on any great performance on the part of the Bureau. That record's there."

"I've taken the position that this question transcends more than just education issues. You start segregating out and this represents a form of fragmentation of the trust organization."

Gerard's views on a White House policy for Indians were discouraging. "I would doubt very much that there is going to be a national Indian policy statement and quite frankly, I don't think that it would be wise to press for it right now, given the climate we're dealing in. It seems to me that we have many broad authorities and with some creative thinking, we can do a lot with these, but for my part, I'm not pressing for a message at this point."

Gerard's priority concerns were focused on addressing the current 'backlash' attempts to erode the legal basis for the relationship between Indians and the government."

"It's no secret that we've got this conflict between Interior and Justice over the scope of the trust responsibility. To me, that's really the most critical issue that's before us in the field today. If the trust responsibility is narrowed in scope, then we would unfortunately see the erosion of sovereignty, what would happen to our water, jurisdiction, a lot of other things that are important to the maintenance of Indian communities."

As far as educational performance is concerned, Gerard said, "I'm still concerned as the overall head of Indian affairs about the high drop-out rates, the poor performance of Indian students even after they graduate and go on to college. That's not to say that there aren't expectations."

It would seem to me that we must begin asking ourselves, 'why', why the drop-out rate, and attack that. What are the problems that contribute to poor performance and see what steps need to be taken. Is it curriculum? Is it bi-cultural?..... just to strengthen our basic program so that we turn out students who can compete, academically or vocationally, whatever path they choose to follow."

When asked about his thoughts on implementing the Self-Determination Act, (Gerard was one of the authors) Gerard commented, "I guess my greatest disappointment, now that I'm on this side of the street, is seeing the inordinate amount of detail that we've associated with the act. That's made it cumbersome, and unfortunately given some attitudinal problems on the part of some Bureau employees. "There are many ways they can frustrate a Tribes or tribal organization's desire to opt to use provisions of that act. We're taking a hard look at some those obstacles. We hope to smooth it out."

THE DAILY HERALD

Arlington Heights, Illinois NOVEMBER 5, 1978

First in a Series

Michigan to test voucher support

Diane Granat

Byline report

DIANE GRANAT

During four years as education reporter for the Chicago *Daily Herald*, Ms. Granat covered local, regional and state education issues and did numerous features articles on education topics. Because it was an issue of growing importance to the suburban readers of the *Herald*, Ms. Granat chose "Parent Participation in Schools" as her Fellowship study topic.

In this series, as well as in her Fellowship report, Ms. Granat documents the forms parent activism takes in schools around the country. She describes parent involvement in such areas as textbook selection, voucher programs and collective bargaining. Ms. Granat's work was published in the November 1979 *New York Times Education Supplement*, by the National Committee for Citizens in Education and other organizations concerned with the parent's role in the schools.

Following the Fellowship, Ms. Granat became the Washington correspondent for her paper.

LANSING, Mich. — Squeezed between two well-publicized tax reform measures on Tuesday's ballot in Michigan is a third tax question that could dramatically change the face of education in this state.

Proposal H, or the voucher plan, would eliminate property tax support for the public schools and require the state to issue payments, or vouchers, to parents of school-age children that they could redeem at the public or private school of their choice.

Supporters of the plan say it would improve education by stimulating competition among schools, give parents greater control over their children's education, and provide a Renaissance for non-public schools.

CRITICS CHARGE that it would devastate the state's public schools by wiping out local school districts, create administrative chaos and lead to more racial and economic segregation. Mostly, opponents charge that the voucher plan is aid to parochial schools in disguise and, therefore, unconstitutional.

With the parochial aid question at the forefront of the debate, advocates and opponents of such aid throughout the nation are closely watching the Michigan vote because of the precedent it could set for other states.

The voucher plan found its way onto Tuesday's ballot with the backing of the Michigan Assn. of Non-public Schools, a coalition of Catholic, Missouri Synod Lutheran and Christian Reform Schools.

PROPOSAL H joins two other post-Proposition 13 tax measures: The Tisch and Headlee Amendments. The Tisch amendment would cut property taxes in half and replace the lost revenue with a higher income tax and increased business tax.

The Headlee plan, which has garnered the most support from government officials, would not cut taxes, but would put a limit on the gross of future taxes and a ceiling on government spending.

THE VOUCHER proponents figure their plan fits in neatly with the two other tax proposals because of the radical alteration it suggests in educational financing.

The proposal promises to cut property taxes by 65 percent, a total of almost $2 billion. Although the amendment does not spell out how the state would replace this revenue, most observers agree it would come from an increase in income taxes. They predict income taxes would increase 50 percent to make up the loss and pay for the $215,000 non-public school students who would now receive public support.

Besides promoting the voucher plan as a tax reform measure, its supporters, mostly religious organizations, are promoting the idea that it would create freedom of choice for parents.

"The voucher plan gives the freedom to parents and children to select the schools they feel will best answer their children's needs," said Daniel Veldman, of the National Union of Christian Schools, who is heading the campaign in favor of Proposal H.

Supporters also believe if schools must compete for vouchers public education will improve. With students able to transfer to different schools outside their neighborhoods "a mediocre teacher in an inferior school

would have to shape up or ship out," said Tom Bergeson, director of the Michigan Catholic Conference, a major voucher backer.

BUT OPPONENTS of the voucher plan, who include the state teachers union, department of education, and state school boards associations, say the arguments for a property tax cut and greater parent choice are a smokescreen for the real issue: aid to parochial schools.

"This is clearly not a scheme to try out vouchers. It is just the best mechanism (its proponents) could develop to provide aid to private schools," said Patricia Widmayer, director of the legislation office of the Michigan Dept. of Education.

The plan's detractors insist that giving money to parents to spend on tuition at parochial schools violates the Constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state. If the proposal passes Tuesday, they say they are ready to take it to court.

Aside from the Constitutional question are a slew of other problems raised by voucher opponents. They argue that abolishing the property tax and turning over school financing to the state will eliminate local control of schools. The allocation of vouchers will foster greater racial and economic fragmentation, opponents say, by making it easier for affluent, white parents to flee to elite academies.

ALSO, ANTI-VOUCHER forces say, the plan would create an administrative mess in issuing the money, arranging transportation and in planning staff and building use because schools would be unsure of their enrollments.

What greatly upsets opponents are the unanswered questions, issues that voucher supporters say should be decided by the state legislature. Among the questions:

- How much should each voucher be worth? Should each parent receive the maximum spent per pupil in Michigan, about $2,300, or the minimum, about $630? Or should the voucher be equal to the average per pupil expenditure in the state, about $1,500?
- Can parents cross district lines to send their children to a school outside their own area?
- Can private and parochial schools charge tuition in addition to the voucher amount presented by the child?
- Can public or private schools refuse to accept a voucher for any reason?

The last question worries voucher opponents, who fear private schools will skim off the best students and make the public schools a dumping ground for poorer students.

Bergeson of the Michigan Catholic conference said, however, that to accept vouchers schools must not discriminate in admissions. And most agree some kind of compensatory aide would be developed to assure the continuation of special education and programs for disadvantaged children.

The voucher proposal appears to have most of its support among parochial school parents, who say they need a break because they are "doubly taxed" by paying for both public schools and tuition at private schools. Critics, however, argue that these Critics, however, argue that these dren from public schools and pay private school tuition.

ONE FEAR expressed by non-public school parents is that state subsidies via vouchers would impose more regulations on their schools. If state requirements for non-public schools do increase, David Ruhala of the Michigan Assn. of School Boards predicts "within 10 years there will be very little difference between private and public schools under the voucher plan."

Because of the uncertainty in the plan, opponents to the voucher argue that Michigan should not be the testing ground for "confused educational theory."

"Why should we be the guinea pig?" asked Kathryn Boucher, director of the Council Against Parochiad.

Except for a governor's task force starting to figure out how to implement the proposal, most legislators and school officials are ignoring it until Wednesday, planning some quick huddles if it passes.

Editor's note: From parents who try to prevent school closings to those who fight against open classroom settings, "parent power" is a significant, although sporadic, force in Northwest suburban schools.

Across the nation too, parents are seeking a louder voice in their children's education. Sunday Herald reporter Diane Granat is studying parent involvement in schools across the country as part of a Ford Foundation Educational Journalism Fellowship.

This report explores the voucher system on Tuesday's ballot in Michigan, under which parents would exercise control over their education tax dollars by spending them at the public, parochial or private school of their choice.

Controversial vouchers get a second look in '70s

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Like new math, educational vouchers were here and gone in a few years before they had a chance to sink into public acceptance.

The resurgence of interest in vouchers, however, could signal a second chance for this controversial idea that first gained notoriety in the early '70s.

First advanced by conservative economist Milton Friedman in 1955, educational vouchers have attracted an odd blend of liberal and conservative followers.

SOME, LIKE Friedman, tout them because they would encourage freedom of choice and competition in education. Liberals like Christopher Jencks of Harvard like them because of the opportunities vouchers supposedly would create for poor parents to control their children's education.

Several models for vouchers have been developed, all sharing the notion that parents should be issued a coupon worth a certain amount to apply toward the cost of educating their child at the school of their choice.

Despite their popularity among some key education theorists, vouchers have met fierce opposition from teachers unions, school administrators and school boards. And the grass roots support, with the possible exception of Michigan, has failed to come forth.

The only school district in the country willing to accept the federal government's offer in the early 1970s of millions of dollars to experiment with the vouchers was the Alum Rock District of San Jose, Calif.

IN THE FIVE-YEAR Alum Rock project the school administration was de-centralized and 51 alternative "mini-schools" were created within the public schools, giving parents choices ranging from a traditional three R's program to options empha-

sizing the community, fine arts, or bilingual education.

But the project in this poor, heavily minority district never went all the way because it was limited to public schools. And the expected increase in parent power failed to materialize. Teachers and principals inherited the most power through decentralization and many parents were inhibited in making educational choices because of a lack of information about the alternatives available, said Susan Abramowitz, an associate with the National Institute of Education which supervised the Alum Rock experiment.

By the time the federal funding ended in Alum Rock in 1977 many of the options had disappeared, but open enrollment remained, giving parents some choice in their child's schooling.

A VARIATION ON vouchers exists in Vermont, where local districts give high school students tuition to spend at the school of their choice if the home district does not provide a suitable secondary school. The GI bill, which gives certain veterans tuition aid at the public or private school of their choice, also has been compared to vouchers, although essential differences exist because the bill involves mobile adults who are not bound by compulsory school attendance laws.

Studies of vouchers were conducted in East Hartford, Conn., and New Hampshire with federal encouragement, but in 1976 both areas rejected the concept, effectively ending any attempt by the federal government to test the idea in American schools.

A major force standing in the way of vouchers has been the nation's teachers unions: The National Education Assn. and the American Federation of Teachers. Explains Abramowitz: "The idea of opening up education to the market place threatens the monopoly educators now hold. It was really tricky for us to do the experiment (at Alum Rock) with (AFT chief) Albert Shanker so vociferously against it."

The future of the voucher idea? "I don't see it getting off the ground," Abramowitz said. "In order to implement it, we need to find someone who wants it. There are more problems than people can handle with vouchers, so they would rather not bother."

Second in a Series

November 12, 1978

Parents register dissent on school texts

ROCKVILLE, Md. — When Mary Baily Bowen's son brought home his 10th grade English assignment last fall, she was appalled. The book her son was assigned to read was Gordon Parks' 1963 novel, "The Learning Tree," a chronicle of growing up black in Kansas in the 1920s.

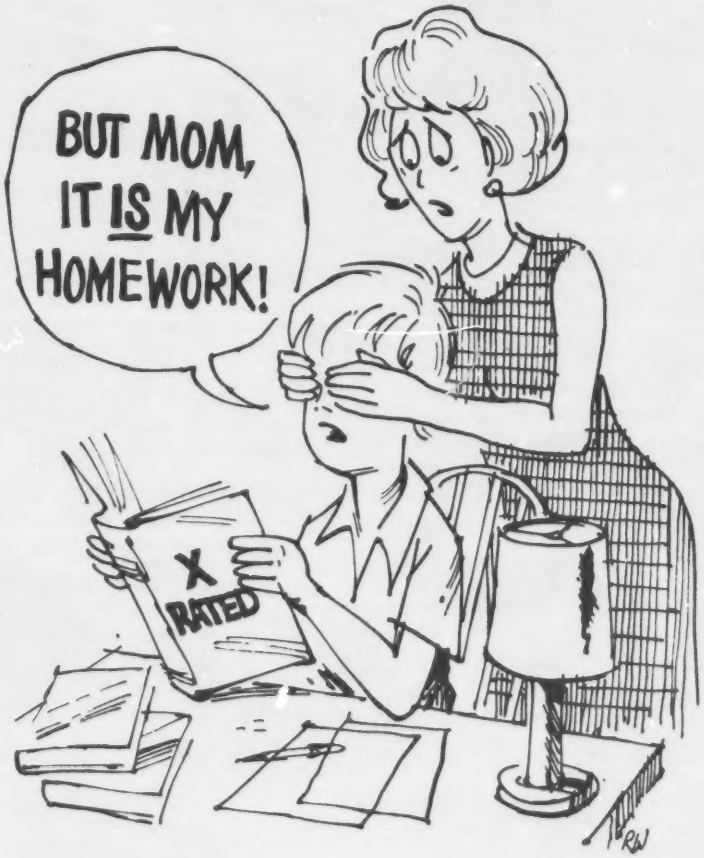
To Mrs. Bowen, a Maryland housewife who keeps a copy of the Ten Commandments posted on her refrigerator door, the book was loaded with vulgar language, explicit sex and excessive violence.

She wanted the book off the Montgomery County Public Schools' textbook list, and waged a 10-month fight with the school board and school administration to get it removed. Last June the board refused to rescind the book's approval, defending it for its relevance to adolescents and its positive moral overtones. Mrs. Bowen now plans to appeal to the Maryland State Board of Education.

The battle over "The Learning Tree" in Montgomery County, a well-to-do suburban area of Washington, D.C., is one of dozens of textbook controversies that have erupted in recent years throughout the country.

THEY DEAL with a thorny issue for parents, educators, school boards and publishers: what textbooks should be used in American classrooms and who should select them?

To teachers, the conflicts often are



Herald graphics

perceived as a matter of academic freedom, a challenge to their professional judgment about what materials to use in the classroom.

But to parents, who resent being branded as "book burners" and "censors," the issue of textbook selection has become an issue of a parent's right to exert an influence on his child's education

. The most publicized recent textbook battle was in Kanawha County, Va., where in 1974 strife over textbooks led to violence and strikes. But similar book bannings, though less violent, are occurring throughout the country, from affluent suburbs like Montgomery County to rural Midwestern towns. For instance:

• --In suburban Minneapolis last spring, the Forest Lake school board banned a film version of Shirley Jackson's famous short story, "The Lottery," after parents charged the film was "too violent," "anti-religious," "anti-family" and "anti-American."

• --A senior citizens group in rural Warsaw, Indiana, last year burned 27 copies of a values clarification textbook that was stripped from the town's high school curriculum after school board members and parents objected to the book's technique of asking students to consider alternatives to value systems which their parents accepted as absolutes.

• --A U.S. District Court judge in July ruled that the Chelsea School Committee outside of Boston violated the constitutional rights of students and faculty members by removing a controversial poem from the high school library. The poem, "The City to A Young Girl," part of an anthology of poetry by teen-agers, was described as "filth" by the school committee.

PRESSURES to ban textbooks come from both the left and right from feminist and civil rights groups trying to rid the schools of sexist and racist stereotypes, to more traditional groups, crusading against dirty words and "anti-Christian" attitudes in textbooks.

Targets range from "Little Black Sambo" ("racist stereotype") and "Mary Poppins" ("sexist stereotype") to "The American Heritage Dictionary" ("too many four-letter words") and "Mademoiselle" magazine ("sexually permissive and excessive nudity").

While the anti-racism, anti-sexism forces have made inroads in recent years, convincing publishers to revise textbooks to cast women and minorities in a more positive light, the heavier pressure most recently is coming from more conservative groups, say organizations like the American Library Assn., which monitor textbook conflicts.

These groups often bear acronyms like CURE (Citizens United for Responsible Education) in Montgomery County or PONY-U (Parents of New York-United) and they appear to be linked by an "informal but effective network," said Roger Funk, assistant director of the library association's Office of Intellectural Freedom in Chicago. The groups have mailing lists of sympathetic parents and "what shows up in one town, soon will show up in others," Funk said.

Many of the people involved in censorship battles are also working against gay rights, abortion, gun control and for the tax revolt, contends Dorothy Massie, a human relations specialist for the National Education Assn., the nation's largest teachers union.

"THERE IS much grist for the right-wing mill," Ms. Massie said, "and I think that we're in for it. It's got a lot of teachers very scared, in conservative communities particularly."

The NEA contends that the professional educator should have the dominant voice in the selection of classroom materials. There is, however, "a tacit acknowledgement by the NEA that the board of education has the final authority in determining what books are purchased," Ms. Massie said.

In some communities where parents have protested certain books, the school board has bowed to community pressure and removed the offensive texts. Occasionally, a school board member may lead the fight against a book, as in Kanawha County. In many instances, however, angry parents charge that the school board merely rubber-stamps the choices of educators.

This is the opinion of some parents in Montgomery County, one of the nation's richest counties with a median family income in 1976 of $27,600 and houses selling for an average of $62,000. Parents of the county's 108,000 schoolchildren are generally well-educated, with many holding high-paying jobs with the federal government.

Since the early 1970s parents here have been struggling to gain more control of their children's classroom reading material.

THE EFFORTS of the National Oganization for Women in fighting sexist textbooks have been particularly successful, although now that publishers are beginning to respond, they have slowed down their fight.

Less successful, though perhaps more vocal, have been the campaigns of conservative groups like CURE and an allied group, Parents Who Care, which fought a four-year legal battle with the Montgomery County schools to get materials that "invade the privacy of the student and the home" removed from the schools.

"The Learning Tree" case is representative of what these parents are fighting for: not just to ban four-letter words from classroom texts, but to have a louder voice in the textbook selection process.

One goal of Parents Who Care was for the establishment of parent textbook review committees to examine materials before they are purchased for classroom use.

Although this request was denied, mounting pressures from parents throughout Maryland led to a state board directive in 1976 for each county school system to establish textbook review policies.

THE ORDER was partly in response to a bill introduced that year in the state legislature by Delegate J. Hugh Nichols of Howard County. The bill, defeated after a lobbying campaign by state teachers unions, would have required a 90-day display of new materials before their purchase and a public hearing for parents who objected to the materials.

Nichols said he sponsored the bill because "parents could only get input by challenging a textbook already used. I thought it would be better if parents could make their suggestions prior to the final decision, so we don't create an adversary environment."

In Montgomery County, the mechanism developed to solicit citizen opinion is a 30-day period in which texts proposed for purchase "lie in state" at the county school headquarters so parents can examine them.

If there is a question about a text, parents can ask a panel of teachers and administrators to review the choice of that particular book.

This re-evaluation process does not just apply to new materials. At any time during the school year a parent may question the materials his child is using and an ad hoc committee of educators is appointed to reconsider the book, said Frances Dean, director of the Division of Instructional Materials in the county's schools.

"ANY PARENT has the right to question what is used," said Ms. Dean. The danger, however, "is if you take out something for one parent, he's making a decision for the other 29 students in the class."

Mrs. Bowen, who used the re-evaluation process to object to "The Learning Tree," rejects that argument.

"The book is provided at all the public libraries at taxpayers' expense. Students may individually read the book anytime they wish," she said. In the schools, however, "students are a captive audience and I am a captive taxpayer," Mrs. Bowen said.

What bothers parents like Mrs. Bowen is the classification of their protest as censorship.

"I'VE NEVER quite been able to figure out why a teacher's acceptance or rejection of a book is called 'sound professional judgment' and a parent's exercise of this right is called 'book burning,' " said Kris McGough, a parent activist from Howard County, Maryland, just south of Baltimore.

It's an argument that apparently is hitting a nerve not just with educators and school boards, but with publishers, too.

Henry Kaufman, general counsel for the Assn. of American Publishers in New York, said school publishers are reacting by encouraging parent involvement in the textbook selection process.

The problem, he said, is "there is a gray area between selection and censorship that is very hard to define.

"WHEN A teacher chooses one book over another, are you censoring an idea or are you picking the best book? There has to be some selectivity, but where does it become censorship and a First Amendment violation?"

While parents and professionals debate who is censoring and who is choosing, Hugh Nichols of Howard County insists that a recognized vehicle for parents to express their feelings is the only sane solution.

"It is almost a violation of individual rights to say parents don't have a right to look at books," he said. "You cannot force people to participate, but you can give them an opportunity to do so."

Book seized so students sue

LEVITTOWN, N.Y. In a late-night raid on the high school library in the Island Trees school district here, the works of noted authors Bernard Malamud, Kurt Vonnegut and others were stripped from the shelves.

Nine books including Malamud's "The Fixer," Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five" and Eldridge Cleaver's "Soul on Ice" were confiscated by members of the local school board, who declared the books were "anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic and just plain filthy."

Unlike Montgomtry County, Maryland, where a liberal-leaning school board has often resisted pressure from more conservative parents, the school board in this blue-collar section of Levittown led the fight to ban books, apparently with the wide support of townspeople.

IN ANOTHER twist to the familiar pattern of parents rising to condemn (or defend) controversial books, swift opposition to the board's action came not from parents, but from students in the district.

Shortly after the books were removed two years ago, several students with the help of the New York Civil Liberties Union sued the board, contending the book banning violated their constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression. They still await a decision.

The trouble began when a school board member apparently obtained a list of objectionable books from a conservative parents group in New York State. Students in Island Trees charge that without even reading the books, board members had them hauled from the junior and senior high school libraries.

School board members defend their action, asserting that "certain material is offensive to the sensibilities of many people and that certain precautions must be taken particularly with children.

"SINCE THE welfare of the children (in the district) has been entrusted to us for all the hours of the school day, we are obligated...to protect them from physical, mental or spiritual harm," the board said in a statement issued in August on the case.

Some students, however, thought they would do better without the protection offered by the seven board members.

"Students should have free access to all ideas regardless of whether they're controversial," said 19-year-old Steven Pico, a graduate of Island Trees who is a plaintiff in the case against the board.

But in what Island Trees Supt. W.H. Oglesby describes as a "knock-down, drag-out fight between liberals and conservatives" that has gone on for years in this town settled by World War II veterans, the conservatives seem to be winning this round.

AN ATTORNEY for the civil liberties union said his group was viciously attacked by residents for its help in the lawsuit. And polls taken after the book banning showed more than two-thirds of residents approved of the board's action.

As further evidence of public support, board members point to the last three school board elections: in two, incumbents were re-elected and in the latest election, incumbents ran unopposed.

Regardless of popular support, however, the issue of whether the book-bannings were unconstitutional will now be decided by a federal district court.

If the court here follows the precedent established in July in the book banning case in Chelsea, Mass., the school board may be the loser.

In that case, U.S. District Court Judge Joseph L. Tauro said, "What is at stake here is the right to read and be exposed to controversial thoughts and language, a valuable right protected by the First Amendment.

"THE PROSPECT of successive school committees sanitizing school libraries of views divergent from their own is alarming," Tauro said.

Whatever the court finds in Island Trees, both sides say they will appeal.

Few textbooks challenged locally

Not since feminist task forces set out in the early 1970s to cleanse school bookshelves of sexist stereotypes have there been any major confrontations between parents and educators about the books children read in Northwest suburban classrooms.

Isolated instances arise, such as the unsuccessful attempt by a Buffalo Grove couple a few years ago to get "Little Black Sambo" removed from school libraries in Wheeling Township Dist. 21 because they felt the book portrayed blacks negatively.

There are occasional flaps about profanity used in certain books and currently in Elk Grove Township Dist.

59 a parent is challenging a book dealing with an unmarried mother, alleging that the topic is forbidden in the district's family life curriculum.

IN GENERAL, though, local educators say parents rarely question the materials their children use in school.

Why the apparent peace? School administrators say most textbook problems are resolved informally between a parent and teacher or principal and, the problems rarely reach the board of education, where they become well-publicized.

With the exception of a few places like Dist. 21 and Elgin area Unit Dist. 46 where parents may serve on curriculum committees that pick books, parents are generally excluded from the original selection process. In most districts, books are chosen by a committee of teachers and administrators and later approved by the board of education.

Before the school board adopts a textbook list, however, books are either displayed at the board meeting, as in High School Dist. 211, or they are available for screening at the district administration center.

PERHAPS THE most thorough plan for parent involvement exists in Schaumburg Township Dist. 54, where a subcommittee of the Citizens Advisory Committee keeps informed on how teachers rate the books they are considering for selection and then reviews the books before final adoption by the board.

Also in Dist. 54, new reading and social studies books are displayed in each school and in local public libraries before they are purchased.

Although these mechanisms exist, local school officials say few parents use them. "It's about like the budget, we don't have many people come in to review (the textbook list)," said Roderick McLennan, associate superintendent for instructional services in Dist. 214.

The biggest trouble spot, officials say, is the family life-sex education curriculum, where a more concerted effort is made to involve parents because of the sensitive nature of the subject.

Currently in Elk Grove Township Dist. 59 parents are involved in reviewing the materials and philosophy used in the district's sex education program. Other districts included parents on the committees developing these programs, generally about 10 years ago in most places.

Another occasional problem area, administrators report, is religion. McLennan in Dist. 214 said last year some opposition was raised to the district's biology texts because they did not teach the theory of creation.

Third in a Series

NOVEMBER 19, 1978

Schools shouldn't teach values: parents

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Sunday Herald reporter Diane Granat is touring the country on a Ford Foundation Fellowship, reporting on educational trends in the United States. This report from Columbia, Md. deals with the controversy stirred by a program where students are taught about death and its impact.

COLUMBIA, Md.– A trip to a funeral home to inspect caskets may not sit well with even the most stout-hearted.

But in this precisely planned "new town" about 20 miles south of Baltimore, such a trip by high school students not only did not sit well with some parents, it set off cries of protests from them.

The class trip last fall was part of a three-week social studies unit on aging, death and dying that was designed to create an awareness among students of their own mortality and to help relieve anxieties about death, teacher Josn Jay Bonstingl recalled months later.

SOME PARENTS however, saw it as one more attempt by the schools to meddle into what they believe is the domain of home and church alone: inquiry into and instruction in values.

After receiving complaints from a handful of parents who argued that "death education" impinges on students' personal religious beliefs, the Howard County Board of Education this summer outlawed discussions on death from any required courses.

Parent resistance to this unit in Columbia runs parallel to other efforts in Maryland and other parts of the country to put a halt to any coursework that delves into personal values and morals incidents ranging from classic battles against sex education - to newer versions against sensitivity training, values clarification and in this case, death education.

MORE specifically, though, the targets are not the teaching of any morals in the classrooms, but instruction in what parents call "secular humanism," a non-religious value system that encourages students to question the Judeo-Christian beliefs of their parents.

These battles often go hand-in-hand with book bannings, with objections to textbooks used by parents as a vehicle to point out their overall dissatisfaction with the subject matter being taught.

In Howard County, the fight against death education was led by Kris McGough, a housewife turned school activist who has earned herself a column on a "parent's perspective" in the national journal for social studies educators.

For several years Mrs. McGough has been battling the local schools about courses she views as an invasion of a family's privacy.

WHAT FIRST triggered her anger was an assignment her daughter received to keep a journal of her innermost thoughts. After that incident, Mrs. McGough said she discovered "all this mental health stuff in the curriculum" from rap sessions and students role-playing conflicts with their parents to questionnaires that asked students how often they quarrel with their parents.

The object of Mrs. McGough's complaints was not to totally ban these exercises from the curriculum, she said, but to require parental consent before dealing with personal topics in the classroom. One of her early victories was to win from the school board a policy requiring parental permission for any research conducted in the school that asks students about their home or family.

Bonstingl, who taught the offending course, said any student could opt out of any part of the course, including the trip to the funeral parlor and an-

swering a survey (which Mrs. McGough found objectionable) that asked students questions like "What do you think happens to a person when he dies?" or "Whose death would be most difficult for you?"

ALTHOUGH a discussion of euthanasia, for example, in a unit on aging may tread on some religious attitudes, Bontingl said, to avoid the topic would deny most students of highly relevant instruction.

"If the Karen Ann Quinlan case is on "Sixty Minutes" and Walter Cronkite for weeks, is it not justifiable meat for us to toss around in a social studies class on contemporary issues?" he asked.

The Howard County Board of Education apparently was not alone however, in its agreement with Mrs. McGough and others who want sensitive subjects kept out of the classroom.

In Frederick County in western Mayland, the school board in 1976 wiped out sensitivity training, values clarification exercises and anything that smacks of "humanism," the non-religious teaching of values.

AND FOR years Parents Who Care, a conservative group in Montogmery County near Washington, D.C., locked horns with the county school board in an attempt to remove from the schools family life courses, sensitivity training and other practices that the parents claim intrudes on a student's privacy.

Most of the complaints leveled by Parents Who care were dismissed by a state hearing examiner, although some school officials in Montogmery County said teachers are extra cautious now when dealing with sensitive areas, such as sex education or values training.

Malcolm Lawrence, a former state department official and father of nine who serves as spokesman for Parents Who Care, said his objection to values clarification exercises is when a teacher presents a situation involving a moral choice, opens it up for discussion and doesn't say if there is one right or wrong answer.

BUT SOME educators argue that the home and church have abdicated their responsibility in values education, leaving it to the schools. And there are some value issues which can't be avoided in a contemporary social studies or literature class, they say.

There are certain issues, such as cloning or abortion, "that are a very real part of life, whether people think it's right or wrong to discuss them," said Fred Czarra, supervisor of social studies in Howard County.

These issues "are bound to come up in a social studies class. The teacher has to say, 'This is a pressing issue. What are the arguments pro and con?' And then the students should make up their minds," Czarra said.

Roger Funk, who monitors parent attempts to influence curriculum in his job as assistant director of the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom, said, "Parents are confusing a lack of religious bias with a lack of moral standards."

Fourth in a Series

DECEMBER 10, 1978

Parents learn to organize to fight teachers union

Editor's Note: As the power of teachers unions increases and tax-conscious parents become more and more concerned about what their children are learning for the money they pay, "parent power" is becoming a significant force in school districts in the Northwest suburbs and across the United States.

Sunday Herald reporter Diane Granat is studying parent involvement in schools throughout the country on a Ford Foundation Fellowship in Educational Journalism. This report from Philadelphia describes parents efforts to gain power by forming a union of their own.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — In a move to counteract the ever-rising power of the city's teachers union, a group of Philadelphia parents has formed a union of their own.

Calling itself a "bargaining agent" for parents and armed with a "Bill of Rights" and "Miranda card" for its constituents, the Parents Union has fought major battles with the school system as well as minor skirmishes on behalf of individual parents.

The Philadelphia Parents Union represents a more militant strain of parent activism, in contrast to the more sedate parent advisory councils springing up in many communities or traditional parent-teacher associations, both of which often are co-opted by administrators.

THE 1,200-MEMBER union emerged during a prolonged teachers strike in 1972 because "no one was speaking out for the parents and children," founder Happy Fernandez explained. And it is a natural backlash against what citizen activist experts describe as a tipping in the balance of power in favor of teachers and school administrators in recent years.

Admittedly "small but vocal," members of the Parents Union in the past year concentrated their energy on fighting school budget cuts and trying (unsuccessfully) to avert a teachers strike this fall.

Several years ago they sued the school board for negotiating away the board's right to decide educational policy questions such as class size or extracurricular activities. The parents now are trying to limit the scope of bargaining to wages and working conditions.

Parents Union members also work to inform parents of their rights, distributing pamphlets on items on "What to do if your child is suspended" and wallet-sized "Miranda cards," listing parents' right to look at their child's records or be informed of a school's academic requirements.

HELPING INDIVIDUAL parents with problems is a key to the union's effectiveness, coordinator Barry Lutz said. Sticking to their labor union terminology, parent "grievances" are handled by one full-time and 25 volunteer advocates who help parents wade through the school bureaucracy.

Handling individual complaints tunes in the union to larger problems in the system, Lutz said.

"How do we know corporal punishment is on the rise? We know because we get reports about kids being slapped around," Lutz said. "Then we

can take that to the administration and school board and raise hell."

Parents Union leaders are willing to create a commotion not only in school board meetings, but on the city's streets as well.

ON A RECENT MORNING, for example, nearly 200 parents blocked the entrance to their central Philadelphia school to protest overcrowding. Parents Union leaders rallied to their support, lending their expertise in gaining media exposure and getting their voices heard by school authorities.

But do the authorities listen to the Parents Union? One sign of their recognition by school officials is the monthly meeting the Parents Union has with the school superintendent to discuss parent concerns.

But other school administrators and school board members dismiss Parents Union complaints. Board member George P. Stahl, Jr., said "they want all things in a society that does not provide revenue for all things."

And Daniel McGinley, president of the Philadelphia Assn. of School Administrators, said the Parents Union is more interested in parent rights than responsibilities. "I know of no program in which the Parents Union has offered to help a school, by volunteer tutoring or trying to see that the safety (patrols) have raincoats." McGinley said.

IT IS THE FEELINGS of administrators like McGinley that convinces them of their need to exist, Parents Union leaders say. Most administrators prefer to use parents for their own ends, such as for fund-raising events, they say, and on policy questions parents are only given an advisory role, if any.

'Parents turn out to be tokens," Lutz said. "Suddenly your name is on a plan you've never seen."

Other critics of the Parents Union, including the city's teacher union, discredit the parents group because it does not represent the entire city, having a heavier membership from poor and minority areas.

Founder Fernandez admits this is true, but says the union has had to forsake support in some local areas in order to concentrate on citywide issues, such as the school budget or teachers negotiations.

THE OPENNESS of the administration is crucial to the Parents Union success, leaders say.

While struggling to have a voice in citywide school policies, like the budget or teachers contract, Fernandez said the Parents Union also needs to gain influence at the local school level.

This, too, will depend on administrative openness, she said.

'We need principals who are willing to collaborate in making policies, willing to say to parents, 'We need you, we don't want you to just buy raincoats,'" Fernandez said. "They need to respect parents enough to consult with them as equals in deciding what kids need."

Fifth in a Series

FEBRUARY 4, 1979

Parents press for educational choices

The sign on the door says "Trudy's Room." Inside large pillows are scattered around a carpeted nook, and a group of 8-year-olds stretch out as Trudy, in her stocking feet, tells her students, "Sit back, relax," as she reads them a story.

Down the hall, in Jay's room, a girl named Heidi draws pictures of an Indian family, while Mark practices his cursive writing and Saffron flips through some old National Geographics. Outside their room, Taylor and Canon are playing chess because "we're all caught up in our work."

This is the Marcy Open School, an easy-going elementary school in the southeast section of Minneapolis.

Just across the freeway, it's a different world at the Barton Fundamental School.

In a sixth grade classroom there, children sit in neat rows in front of a bulletin board covered with pictures of the presidents and a copy of the Declaration of Independence.

THERE IS BARELY a whisper as students file in, head for their seats and immediately start working the multiplication problems chalked on the blackboard. When the day officially begins, their teacher reminds them to pledge allegiance to the flag "with fervor."

These two Minneapolis public schools sit on opposite ends of the educational spectrum. But they are strikingly similar in one way. They were created because of parent demands, and many agree the programs are enormously successful because parents and students want to be there.

In at least one-quarter of the school districts in this country, options in education are taking shape to satisfy parent desires for schools which fit their child's individual learning style.

"There is no hard evidence to prove one way of education is the best for all children. There is evidence, however, that children learn in different ways," said W. Roberts Pedrick, superintendent of Cupertino Union School District in California, which offers a wide range of choices, including open enrollment in any school in the district.

"This is not an operation where anyone does his own thing," Pedrick said. "But there ought to be a definite opportunity for the clients to have a say in the educational opportunities given their kids."

IN THE NORTHWEST suburbs, the question of alternative schools has raged as an issue in Buffalo Grove-Long Grove Dist. 96, a small district serving the Lake County portion of Buffalo Grove.

Ever since 1972 when Dist. 96 began using team teaching, open space classrooms and individually guided education, in which each child progresses at his own rate, more traditional parents have called for a return to the one teacher, one class system in rooms with four walls. Next fall some of parents' demands will be met when the district establishes closed, structured classrooms.

In some school districts, including Minneapolis and now Chicago, alternatives are offered to make desegregation more palatable for parents. Chicago, for example, offers options ranging from classical schools to career high schools to promote racial mixing.

Parent frustration, however, is the source of the push for alternatives in

Herald photo

A RELAXED atmosphere in unwalled classrooms is the norm for students like Courtney Birch in Buffalo Grove-Long Grove Dist. 96, but parents there, as in other parts of the country, are calling for an alternative that would put more structure and formality into the schools.

many other districts.

"You don't have an awareness of alternatives until you've had dissatisfaction with what you've had," said Marilyn Halstead, a mother from Cupertino whose children are enrolled in a special program in which social and emotional growth are top priorities.

Parents whose children are enrolled in programs they selected routinely report they are satisfied with their child's schooling. If they were not, they say, they would shop around for a better program, appreciating the room for experimentation offered by their districts.

IN MINNEAPOLIS, where a federal grant helped stir interest in alternatives, parents were influential in designing options. "It's much more successful if you have parents design the thing, instead of being handed down from the administration," said parent Judy Famrer.

Teachers seem to welcome parent participation, too.

At Barton School, "parents helped devise the discipline policy, so if anybody gives me any guff I say, 'Listen, this is coming from your parents," said teacher Helene Dunphy.

Sunday Herald reporter Diane Granat studied parent involvement in schools throughout the country on a three-month Ford Foundation Fellowship in educational journalism. This report describes parents' demands for alternative schools for their children.

EVEN IF PARENTS aren't flocking to alternative programs, Pedrick and others feel the movement inspires some healthy competition between schools. For an alternative program to make it, Pedrick said, it must stand the test of the marketplace. And with shrinking enrollments, other schools will try to keep up in order to attract students, he said.

George Haakenson, a principal in Minneapolis, warned, however, that competition in an era of declining enrollment can turn into "body-snatching."

"Any program that starts losing students immediately wants to expand its potential market. It wants to go out and advertise, to plead for more people to come to it," Haakenson said.

Competition between educational programs turns into an advertising war, Haakenson warned. "The best huckster is going to get the students, even if he has a rotten product." In Minneapolis, there is concern declining enrollment and a financial squeeze will make it difficult to preserve choices. With schools slated for closing, one administrator said, parents must decide whether they want to protect the program or the school where it is located. Some parents are so devoted to their local school that they say, "Make it anything you want to, just make it near home."

Cupertino parents seem less threatened by the impact of budget cuts on their programs because the school board has promised their continuation as long as parent interest is high. And financial cutbacks also are not a worry because the district has adhered to the principle that alternative programs must not cost more than other, more traditional approaches.

Although alternatives are hailed by dissatisfied parents as the answer to their prayers, most parents still tend to keep their children at their neigh-

borhood school, researchers have found.

In Cupertino, for example, only about 10 percent of the district's 16,000 elementary students are enrolled in schools outside their neighborhood.

One deterrent, Pedrick said, may be that parents must provide their own transportation. He said the district is working with the local public transportation system to make it easier for students to move around, but in this period of tight finances, the district has no plans to pay for busing.

School options available for suburban students

If you live in River Trails Dist. 26 and you don't like the way things are going at your local school, you can transfer your child to any of the other three elementary schools in the district.

In Arlington Heights Dist. 25, parents who aren't thrilled about team-teaching can have their child switched to a more conventional classroom across the hall.

These are among the choices available to parents in Northwest suburban schools — no full-blown special schools for special interest, but a flexibility which many educators feel gives parents adequate choice.

THE ULTIMATE option still is to pull a child out of the public schools and place him in a private or parochial school more to a parent's liking.

Whether because of religious convictions or disenchantment with public schools, parents have been putting their children in Catholic, Lutheran and elite private schools at a steady rate for years.

WHAT IS more common in local public schools are open transfer policies. In several areas, including Dist. 26, Dist. 59 and Wheeling Township Dist. 21, parents may move their child to another school in the district, as long as they pay for their own transportation and don't overload any one school.

Generally, however, schol officials say only a handful of parents take advantage of this option. Most are too devoted to their neighborhood school and its closeness to home to bother with the rigmarole of transfers, officials say.

And when parents do choose another school for their child, it is usually for a reason like the school's proximity to a babysitter's home or some other family convenience rather than for a different educational philosophy, said Dist. 59 Supt. James Fay.

IN SOME districts where general open enrollment is not allowed, parents whose children are in unconventional classrooms can switch them to more traditional classes.

In Dist. 25 and Palatine Township Dist. 15, parents who don't want their children in multi-age classrooms, for example, can ask for placement in a room where children are in a specific grade level.

On the high school level the options are broader, although students are not free to switch schools according to whim. With many electives and choices about how to schedule the school day, students and parents have a fair degree of freedom in designing their education.

Alternative programs like The Bridge in High School Dist. 211 or the STEP (Student Theraputic Educational Program) school in High School Dist. 214 provide an option for students with behavior problems who can't adjust to regular classrooms.

Whether they are responding to a sensed need in their districts or administrators just believe in choices as a matter of philosophy, the presence of options like open enrollment in the Northwest suburbs is almost always the result of an administrative decision rather than parent requests, school authorities say.

Herald photo

PARENTS SEEKING a straight-laced alternative to public schools in the Northwest suburbs may turn to the Rev. Paul Lindstrom's Christian Liberty Academy in Prospect Heights. His school is private, but in several states public systems have created similar fundamental schools as options to satisfy parents.

Unlike schools alike in defining goals

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Andy Steele, a dark-haired third-grader who carries a heavy bag of books home every day from the Hoover Fundamental School, knows exactly what he likes about his school.

"The rules," he declares spontaneously. "I like the way they keep things organized."

Little more than a mile away, at Ohlone School, freckled Jason Wright is equally confident about the way things work at his open school.

"We have to do math, phonics, reading and our diary at some time every day. After we finish our work we can do drawing, painting or extra work," the outgoing 7-year-old said.

PERHAPS BECAUSE these two schools are so well-defined in their goals and methods, children as young as Andy and Jason can securely describe what it is that makes their schools special. And it could be what keeps their parents happy, too.

At Hoover, satisfaction also is high because parents were instrumental in writing the school's philosophy statement, principal Wallace Clark said. "We are trying to fit the needs of students as defined by the parents."

Teachers are assigned to these schools on a volunteer basis, creating what many believe is a winning combination.

The two alternative schools in this affluent, highly-educated, northern California suburb were created because of parent demands. Enrollment is from the entire district, and parents must provide their own transportation. Both are thriving, with waiting lists still lengthy.

OPEN EDUCATION at Ohlone means classrooms where pupils choose activities, progress at their own rate, tutor their peers and engage in independent study with the teacher as a guide.

The "joy of learning" is emphasized in this relaxed, informal school, where students call teachers by their first names and praise is reinforced by a lot of hugging and smiling. Teachers more often are found in child-sized chairs working with students than at their desks. Children gravitate to cushioned rocking chairs and hand-me-down couches for some "after work" reading.

Hoover School was born in 1974 after parents petitioned the Palo Alto school board for a structured program that would stress basic academic skills.

Twenty minutes after registration opened at 8 a.m. on a Saturday morning, classes were filled. The program grew from 150 students in 1974-75 to 520 this year.

STRICT STANDARDS are set for students. They must remain quiet in class, wear neat clothing, walk together to assemblies and present tardy slips when late. Homework is assigned four nights a week, and report cards come home with A's through F's.

The school is quiet, orderly and runs on a regular routine, but Clark insists that "we have not gone back 40 years. We don't have McGuffey readers. The desks aren't screwed to the floor and kids don't have to be permanent fixtures in their desks."

Unlike Ohlone, where activity is child-centered, at Hoover the teacher is the clear authority in the classroom. Where parents play an active role as aides at Ohlone, at Hoover they are politely told to stay out of the classroom. "A teacher is being paid good money to be teaching," Clark said.

There is no antagonism between the two schools, principals say. Clark says Ohlone Principal Jim Mathiott's "emphasis is on the affective domain, but he doesn't ignore academics. My emphasis is on academics, but I don't ignore the affective."

Last in a Series

FEBRUARY 18, 1979

Parents putting schools to the test

Sunday Herald reporter Diane Granat studied parent involvement in schools throughout the country on a three-month Ford Foundation Fellowship in educational journalism. This final report analyzes "parent power" as a force in the nation's classrooms.

After the bake sale, what's next?

In school systems across the country, this question is assuming new prominence as parents are coming out from behind the bake sale counter and carving a new role for themselves in school affairs.

No longer content to be fund raisers for the PTA, parents in many places are seeking a louder voice in substantial issue affecting their children's education: Parents in Montgomery County, Md., protest the use of textbooks they find offensive; Minneapolis parents call for fundamental schools stressing ld values like homework and patriotism; parents in Philadelphia for ma union to counteract rising power of teachers unions.

In the northwest suburbs, parents in Schaumburg Township Dist. 54 demand small class sizes. Mothers and fathers in East Maine Dist. 63 criticize the way schools were closed. And parents in a section of Elgin Area Unit Dist. 46 try to raise funds to construct new schools after voters in the rest of the district reject the idea.

It's the voice of parent power.

Much of the recent activism by parents is born out of alienation and frustration with the public schools. Witnessing a decline in test scores and a rise in illiteracy, many parents are questioning whether educators, who have dominated decision making in schools in the past century, really known what's best for children.

And educators, whether they believe that parent opinions are worthwhile or they merely want to share the blame for the schools' failings, are asking for parent involvement, acknowledging that the schools can't do the job alone.

"Educators do not have the corner on wisdom about what is the best way to educate children," says William Rioux, a senior associate for the Na-

tional Committee for Citizens in Education, ardent supporters of a more active role for parents.

"Other people who are important to children need a chance to have a say so, to be listened to, and to have a handprint on what happens in schools."

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Sue Evenwell is a parent who wants her voice to be heard. The Elk Grove Township Dist. 59 mother is unhappy about parts of the sex education curriculum and she wants the school board to do something about it.

Like Malcolm Lawrence of Chevy Chase, Md., who wants the schools to stop courses that teach controversial values, or Lou Fein of Palo Alto, Calif., who wants a seat for parents at the bargaining table with teachers, Evenwell and other suburban parents understand an important principle in gaining influence: organize.

They follow the universal motto offered by the National Committee for Citizens in Education to parents wishing to change something in schools: "Please do not try it alone."

With advice like that in hand, a broad assortment of grassroots parent groups form around special concerns, such as after-school day care, programs for the gifted, school closings or budget cuts.

The problem with that type of "flash flood" activity, however, is that its energy is difficult to sustain, say parent power advocates.

Most groups tend to "spring up during a crisis, burn brightly and then fade away when the issue is passed," says Stanley Salett, of the NCCE.

There may be some promise of endurance, however, in attempts by parents to organize as lobbyists in state and federal legislatures.

In New Jersey, for example, independent parent groups are recognizing the growing influence of teachers union lobbies. They have formed a statewide parents lobby to work for the reform of teacher tenure laws and open colective bargainig sessions — issues they claim that only parents are willing to fight about.

Parents in Wheeling Township Dist. 21 also have tried this approach, but their activity has been limited to monitoring legislation and holding candidates nights with lawmakers.

Even the PTA, subjected in the past to much ridicule for its preoccupation with bake sales and bazaars, has turned to active lobbying in Washington, D.C. as a way to renew itself and gain a voice for parents in influencing federal education policy.

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Headlines blare the news that 600 parents jammed a meeting in Dist. 63 to blast the school board's school closing decisions. Or that parents in Palatine Township Dist. 15 are struggling with school officials to obtain after-school day care.

To avoid confrontations like these that arise when parents band together over an emotional issue, some school administrators and school boards try to enlist parent involvement in policy-making before the dam breaks.

Hence the omnipresent advisory group created before a district closes schools. Or the attempt by some districts to include parents on textbook selection teams to prevent censorship attempts later on. This approach to textbook selection is used in Dist. 21 and Dist. 46, although apparently few parents turn out.

All too often, however, these advisory groups are mere tokens, acting as a rubberstamp to a superintendent's recommendations and an opiate to angry parents, says Carl Marburger, former New Jersey education commissioner and now an NCCE associate.

Marburger tells educators to avoid saying, " 'We're going to close a school. Come and ratify what we're doing.' They should say, 'Come and help. I assure you what you tell me will have some influence.' "

One tactic followed in this area and other parts of the country to recruit parent involvement is the creation of on-going advisory councils.

Dist. 21 has one in most schools and one on the district level, fielding questions on topics like discipline, report cards and singing religious songs in the classroom. And the word from Dist. 46's 200-member Citizens Advisory Council reportedly is gospel to the school board, which often won't act on an issue without the council's recommendations.

Besides local efforts like these, numerous vehicles for citizen involvement have been created by state and federal governments.

Title I parent advisory councils were established by federal officials to give local parents a say in how funds for disadvantaged children are spent. And some states, including Florida and South Carolina, require parent councils at every school to give parents a say in matters like budget-making and curriculum formation.

Some observers believe, however, that there is more rhetoric than reality to these aspects of the parent power movement.

Despite an impressive array of citizens groups like these, little power has been transferred to parents and citizens, says Don Davies, president of the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston, which recently investigated the success of mandated advisory groups.

School superintendents continue to dominate educational policy and teachers unions now influence most decisions, Davies found.

Stanford University educational historian David Tyack even questions whether there is a massive surge of interest by parents in making educational policy on a regular basis, as some assert.

"I hear parent leaders and principals saying it's hard to get parents to attend meetings. They don't come out in droves," Tyack says.

James Fay, superintendent in Elk Grove Township Dist. 59, agrees, suggesting that "this business of parent participation is grossly overdone.

"I think most people want to have confidence that paid officials are doing the job," he said. "They don't want to run to committee meetings three times a week to have to run the schools."

But the confidence in paid and elected officials isn't always there. And in the Northwest suburbs and other areas, that is the basis for the loud, if perhaps sporadic, voice of parent power.

• • •

Are schools better places when there is parent participation?

The answer is elusive and varies greatly, depending on perspective.

Tyack points out that many of the liberal advocates of greater parent involvement "have forgotten that many of the grassroots movements are for things they don't want," things like the reinstitution of corporal punishment or the elimination of sex education.

But Marburger argues that even the presence of "malevolent forms" of parent participation, such as textbook censorship or violent resistence to desegregation, does not damage his assertion that parents should have a role in decisions that affect their children.

Teachers and administrators also are wary of greater parent involvement, cautioning that "participation" too often crosses the line into what they believe is "interference" in the operation of schools.

Teachers unions like the National Education Assn. insist that professional educators should have the dominant voice in choosing books, hiring teachers and making budgets.

But as one parent activist in Maryland put it, "The teacher's not the

only educated guy in town anymore," and parents ought to have an equal voice in running schools.

Many teachers disagree with the union stance, stating that their schools are better off with parents involved as policy makers because they know they will have parent support.

A teacher in Minneapolis explained that her school's discipline policy was written by parents. "If anyone gives me any guff I say, 'Listen, this is coming from your parents.' " And if parents don't like the policy, she tells them to join their neighbors and change it.

Generally, those who believe in greater democracy in school governance, less alienation from the consumers of education and a stronger partnership between the home and school see parent participation as a means to improve the climate of schools today.

"Without some sense of control over their lives, citizens become apathetic, cynical and alienated," says Don Davies. Many agree that those conditions lead to a loss of confidence in the schools. This is continually being expressed as voters reject spending increases for public schools and parents begin heading for the private schools.

The cry for power may come from parents, but a large responsibility for making it happen must come from the top.

As a recent survey of advisory councils warned: "The administrator and board that make no effort to involve citizens, or involve them only in a window-dressing role, sooner or later must pay the piper in the steady loss of support or a cataclysmic outbreak."

THE TENNESSEAN

Nashville, Tennessee DECEMBER 25, 1978

First in a Series

Voters Increasingly Revolting Against New Taxes for Schools

Tennessean reporter Saundra Ivey has spent the past three months observing schools across the country as a Ford Foundation Fellow in Educational Journalism. Beginning today, she reports on taxpayer attitudes toward education spending and their implications for Metro schools.

SAUNDRA IVEY

In two and one-half years as education writer for the *Tennessean* Saundra Ivey received a variety of awards for her work and was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Education Writers Association.

In 1978, Nashville, like scores of other cities around the country, was seriously questioning the funding needs of the schools. The proposed school budget was well below the amount administrators said was necessary to maintain existing services. Citizens were reluctant to increase taxes and seemed to be losing confidence in the schools generally. The likelihood of a school tax referendum increased.

Ms. Ivey subsequently chose school tax revolt issues for a Fellowship study that would enable her to explore the causes and results of public reluctance to fund school programs in other areas of the country. The answers other districts had or hadn't found to funding issues could help Nashville make the difficult choices it faced in the year ahead.

In the following series and in her Fellowship report, Ivey reports on the factors and forces that influence voter behavior in school funding ballots, the dynamics of the school tax election and what happens to schools when voters say 'no'

By SAUNDRA IVEY

What does a school district look like after spending critics have their way and the proverbial "fat" is cut from the budget?

Federal Way, Wash., where voters have turned down school officials' requests for money 21 times in the last six years, is about as good an example as you can find.

"WE'VE GONE from a six-period day to a five-period day in the secondary schools, and we dropped courses not critical to earning a living, like foreign language and upper-level math, science and English courses," said James R. Rowlands, the district's coordinator for administrative services.

"One of our science teachers told me this fall that a few years ago, every student could participate at a work station during lab experiments.

"Then they went to demonstration tables where a group of four to six students watched it being done. Today, he does it and the class watches."

DOES SUCH A program create any hardships for college-bound students in Federal Way?

"They get the credits needed for graduation, so they can get into college, but when they get there, they'll be maybe a year behind," Rowlands said.

But it isn't just the college-bound student whose programs have been affected by action of the voters in this suburban community of 65,000, located between Seattle and Tacoma.

"TWO YEARS ago we eliminated all elementary school librarians, all elementary art and music and the seventh-grade music program," Rowlands said.

"We have one school nurse for 15,170 students, and we've increased pupil walking distance to 2 miles.

"We've gone several years without replacing textbooks, and some of them have 1969 copyrights."

AT BRIGADOON Elementary School, once a Federal Way and national showplace, Principal Donald Swanson said only a few science textbooks are available, and they offer students the prediction that, "One day men may walk on the moon."

Because of program cuts resulting from the repeated no votes on school taxes, Federal Way's five junior high schools lost their state accreditation in 1977. one of its three high schools is on probationary accreditation and two are on temporary accreditation.

According to a State Office of Public Instruction report, the high schools would have lost their accreditation altogether had there not been a statewide freeze at existing levels last year.

THOSE ARE the obvious results of school tax revolt, Rowlands said, "but the insidious things are the invisible ones."

Staff reductions necessitated by the tax election defeats had to be made in order of seniority, he said, so the district "had to lay off all our young, bright teachers fresh off the campus with new ideas."

Some teachers who escaped the seniority crunch left voluntarily because of classroom conditions, he said, citing "a fine foreign language teacher who had, in the same classroom, students doing German in one corner, French in another and Latin in another."

BECAUSE OF legislative action which followed a successful legal challenge to Washington's practice of subjecting a high percentage of the local school budget to annual approval by a 60% "supramajority" of the voters, things are looking brighter for Federal Way.

This year, 85% of the district's basic education costs are being paid by the state, and with the percentage scheduled to rise to 100 by 1980-81, "The only way we can go is up," Rowlands said.

Meanwhile, depending on your view of what public education should accomplish, Federal Way provides either a threat or a promise of what could happen here if financial pressures on Metro schools increase.

ONE VIRTUALLY certain source of pressure will be Metro Council members who, facing re-election, will be even less likely this year than they were last spring to approve a school budget that would require a tax increase.

A less certain but potentially more devastating pressure could arise if Councilman Bill McPherson gathers enough signatures to place a sales tax repeal referendum on the August 1979 ballot, as he said last week he "absolutely" plans to do.

An October poll of 324 randomly selected Nashville voters by Vanderbilt political scientist Richard Pride and his students showed 27% of the respondents favoring repeal of the 1½-cent local option tax — far more than the 10% required to qualify a referendum for the ballot, but not enough to repeal the tax that produces $38 million annually for Metro schools.

HOWEVER, even if Pride's sample is assumed to be completely representative of Metro's voting population, the question remains whether the statistics would hold up under the voter registration blitz typically conducted by pro-and anti-school tax forces before such referendums.

For Nashvillians to vote directly on a school tax issue would be unusual, since Tennessee is among the states in which local governing bodies generally set the rate for taxes supporting education.

In 22 other states, according to the Educational Research Service, voters must approve the tax levy for schools, while in five states, they must approve the school budget at annual elections.

IT IS primarily in those states that the growing phenomenon of taxpayer reluctance to fund the schools has occurred.

That phenomenon did not, as some media accounts would have it, spring into existence last summer with passage of California's Proposition 13 (a measure which, though it had considerable impact on school budgets, was designed not as an anti-education spending measure, but as a means of property tax relief).

According to the Educational Research Service, a National Education Finance Project study completed in 1972 concluded that the United States experienced "a genuine taxpayer revolt" during the late 1960s and early '70s — a revolt the study predicted might dominate this decade.

SINCE THAT report, massive program cuts, teacher strikes, school closings and lawsuits have occurred in states where voters have direct control over education spending.

And as those events have occurred, scholars have undertaken numerous studies of why people vote no on school taxes.

For political scientists, such studies are part of a wider attempt to understand voter behavior.

For educators, the studies are part of what they term a battle for financial survival.

Second in a Series

DECEMBER 26, 1978

Educators Miss 'Good' Taxpayers

If there's one thing educators across the country agree on, it's that the days when they asked for more money and the taxpayers' only question was "How much?" are gone.

What they're not so sure about is why.

"IT'S LIKE trying to figure out why two people got a divorce," said administrator James R. Rowlands as he tried to explain why voters in his Federal Way, Wash., district have turned down 21 consecutive school levies.

"There are so many reasons it's hard to separate them."

Rowlands' frustration is shared by his colleagues throughout the nation as they try to assess whether there is a rebellion against taxes or against public education.

"THE TAX thing is for real," said Donald Swanson, a principal in Federal Way.

"My property tax bill was more than $800 a year until the school levy was voted down, and the next year it was only $385. I can almost understand the motivation of people who pull the 'no' lever."

That motivation is even more understandable in light of an Educational Research Service report on studies indicating that voters consider the property tax — the most common local source of school funding — the least fair tax.

"THE PROPERTY tax has ceased to be a measure of a person's ability to pay," said Ed Shock, president of the Elgin (Ill.) Teachers Association.

"A house people bought years ago for $30,000 may now be assessed for $100,000, but their income hasn't gone up commensurately, and if they're retired, they may be living on less."

Not surprisingly, the elderly are among the groups registering greatest opposition to the property tax, a fact which may contribute to the pattern of negative voting by senior citizens in school tax elections.

IN ANALYZING voter behavior in school finance elections, the Educational Research Service points out that some citizens, such as parents of school-age children and educators, derive substantial benefits from the costs of taxes supporting education.

Others, such as non-parents or senior citizens, face additional costs but receive no obvious material benefits.

The latter group's attitudes may have been reflected in this year's Gallup Poll report that "a surprisingly large number of persons volunteered the comment that people with children in the schools should pay a special tax and that the elderly and those without children in the schools should not have to pay any tax to support the public schools."

THE GROWTH of that sentiment, coupled with an aging U.S. population and a decline in birth rate that began in the early 1960s, could cause increasing reluctance to fund the schools.

It is the decreased birth rate, in fact, that has given rise to a major sore spot in school funding — the declining school enrollment pattern that a National Institute of Education study termed "the challenge of the coming decade."

"The public has been taught that each additional child costs more to educate. so people think the opposite should be true," said Denis P. Doyle, chief of the institute's School Finance and Organization Division.

"THEY GET upset when the budget continues to grow as the number of students declines."

That was the case in Nashville last spring, when former Metro Finance Director Kenneth Schoen made political hay with accusations that the school budget request had risen 104% since 1971, while enrollment had dropped 23% in the same period.

But declining enrollments cannot be translated into immediate savings, the National Institute of Education study concluded, in part because of inflation.

BECAUSE ENROLLMENT loss does not occur in neat packages of 35 third graders or 200 students zoned to a particular school, teachers cannot automatically be cut in direct proportion to the decline in students, the study said.

Still, the lower enrollment/higher budget dichotomy has been used as amm unition at budget time in numerous districts, superintendents across the country indicated.

And that is only one of the questions being asked of an educational establishment that "has enjoyed blind public support for years," Doyle said.

"THERE ARE still some people who think, no matter what, that we can't provide too much for our sweet little kiddies," said James Vetro, director of research services for the New York State School Boards Association.

"But as a result of the student revolts of the late 1960s, a lot of older people were soured on this attitude. They see sweet little kiddies who to them look undeserving."

Reports of declining test scores and less than literate high school graduates only reinforce such attitudes, administrators agreed.

ADDING UP these factors — resentment of taxes, declining birth rate, an aging population and a perception that the quality of students or schools has changed — suggests that in many communities school funding faces a cloudy future at best.

And when community conflict over specfic situations in the schools arises, the clouds give way to storm.

Third in a Series

DECEMBER 28, 1978

Schools Suffer From Conflicts In Community Understanding

Suppose Nashville voters had held veto power over the board of education's budget during the 1969 controversy over a sex education proposal some outraged parents termed a "Communist-inspired plot."

Or suppose that two years later, board members had accepted a councilman's recommendation that they sponsor a referendum on increasing taxes to meet the busing expenses of Metro's desegregation plan.

IMAGINING THE outcome of either election sheds light on the dilemma of school districts across the nation whose operating funds depend on direct approval by the voters rather than the appropriation of a city council, as in

Metro.

"If defeat in a school spending election were only an economic issue, a lot more schools would be running out of funds," said Philip K. Piele, director of the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

"Where the financial support breaks down is where there is conflict in the community about what the schools should be doing."

SEX EDUCATION is one of the most striking examples of such conflict, and it was cited by several Washington educators as a major factor in the defeats of their school taxes.

"When our former superintendent proposed a comprehensive health program that would include human sexuality, it just blew up and split the district," said Jack Thompson, director of secondary education for the Renton school system.

"In 1970, we were on *60 Minutes* because of the controversy. It really contributed to our problems passing levies."

THOSE PROBLEMS became so severe that in 1971, the district's newly constructed Lindbergh High School could not be opened because of levy failures.

"It sat boarded up for a year, and then the next year the levy passed and the school was opened," Thompson said, adding that a "more open system" of school administration appears to have ended the district's problems with levy failures.

In Ohio, another state where school budgets are heavily dependent on voter approval, controversy surrounding desegregation is cited as a major reason for school tax defeats.

ALTHOUGH SOME Ohio school officials appear to use levy defeats to bolster their own repeated assertions that court-supervised desegregation cannot succeed, there is no doubt that many voters equate their no's on school-spending with rebellion against court orders they oppose.

Even in Cleveland, where reports questioning the school system's past financial practices, and the October arrest of the city's 27-year-old school board president for exposing his buttocks in an interstate highway "mooning" incident might be expected to raise questions of accountability, the majority of white voters approached in random election-day interviews cited desegregation as their major complaint concerning the schools.

"Are you kidding?" a Cleveland taxi driver replied when asked if he would support the $11.1 million school tax on the Nov. 7 ballot. "To pay for buses?"

"IT'S DEFINITELY going to lose," predicted Vincent Fagen as he finished voting in Cleveland's 22nd Ward.

"The money is secondary. The concern over the ruling by the judge (U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Battisti, who presides over the city's school desegregation case) is first."

Whether or not Fagen was correct in analyzing reasons for the vote, the financially strapped school system's levy was defeated for the third time this year.

IN DAYTON, where the school system's fourth levy attempt in two years was also defeated Nov. 7, teachers' organization president Roberta Hunter said, "Because we're one of those states that goes to the electorate for approval of school taxes, if you're upset about anything — taxes, test scores or busing — you can just say no at the polls."

And in many communities, voters seem to find plenty to upset them in their schools.

In Tennessee, Obion County schools were closed Oct. 18 for 10 days after state funds were cut off because of voters' rejection of a $13 million bond issue designed to bring county schools up to minimum standards.

THE 2-TO-1 negative vote was interpreted as much as an anti-consolidation message as a financial one, since the measure — recently approved by the County Commission, which had authority to issue bonds regardless of the referendum's outcome — involved building six new schools to replace nine existing ones.

The political time bomb such an issue can become is illustrated in Cottage Grove, Oregon's South Lane school district, which was closed for more than a month in 1976 after voters defeated four budget levies.

"The consolidation was 12 years ago, but that memory lingers on, and whenever any controversy about the schools comes up, we get the town-county split," said school board member Kamy Walter.

BUT THERE were other conflicts in Cottage Grove, including charges of "too many frills" and poor communication, which led to the board's buying up the final years of its superintendent's contract. The action followed an outside consultant's evaluation that the district could no longer progress under that administrator, though he had not received an unfavorable evaluation during 11 years in the position.

In other districts, the number of administrators and their salaries have become volatile issues.

"We have the highest paid superintendent in the county, and he's paid more than some city officials," said Bernard Durkin, school board president in the North Syracuse, N.Y., school district that experienced two budget defeats this year.

THE SUPERINTENDENT of the 12,109-pupil district is paid $47,688, "and that's a major bone of contention," Durkin said.

In Elgin, Ill., where a school tax referendum was defeated in May, spending critic Eugene T. Devitt one-upped former Metro Finance Director Kenneth Schoen when he said Elgin's superintendent, who is paid $53,000 including benefits, "makes more than the governor," an assertion which ignores the superior fringe benefits the state's chief executive enjoys.

(Schoen made headlines last spring with his charge that Schools Director Elbert

Brooks "makes more than the mayor.")

HOWEVER, despite the criticism of administrative salaries, Devitt said his Elgin Area Taxpayers Watchdog Committee "only has one target right now, and that's the teachers."

Referring to the powerful Elgin Teachers Association, which has gone on strike four times since 1971, Devitt said, "Teachers have lost their professionalism. All they give a damn about is getting a raise."

Even the school district's superintendent, Paul R. Lawrence, said the perception of "militancy of teachers" probably contributed to the referendum's defeat.

IT WOULD be a mistake to assert cause-and-effect relationships among events which simply follow each other in time, but it appears to be more than a coincidence that districts which experience problems with school tax approvals are rent with conflicts about education and its role in the community.

And whatever those conflicts have been, they are likely to be aired at school tax election time.

Fourth in a Series

DECEMBER 31, 1978

It's Hard Sell On School Tax

WHEN Councilman Bill McPherson initiated a tax repeal campaign, Nashvillians felt the stirrings of a political struggle that is commonplace in other areas — a school system's battle for financial survival.

And the events which occurred before McPherson's referendum petitions were ruled inadequate — his opening of a campaign headquarters and educators' attempts to organize an anti-repeal coalition — were typical first maneuvers in the pattern that characterizes such battles.

That pattern may yet be completed in Nashville, since McPherson says he will "definitely" attempt to place his repeal referendum on the August 1979 ballot, and school board vice chairman George Cate says "it is still possible" the board will seek a referendum on increasing taxes, "depending on the mayor's and council's reactions to this year's budget."

Last summer, the board cut almost $5.2 million in school programs after city officials rejected its full budget, and a council resolution on a sales tax increase referendum was withdrawn after squabbling over how the revenue would be divided if voters approved the measure.

If a tax increase or repeal campaign were completed here along the lines drawn last summer and fall, it would be very much in keeping with a national pattern that has become as sophisticated as campaigns for public office.

For example, just as political candidates develop slogans to convey their images succinctly, pro- and anti-school forces vie to come up with names that will grab the public's attention.

Anti-tax groups' names have included the hard-hitting BELT (Better Education for Less Taxes), in Oregon; the melodramatic Committee to Save Our Homes and Families, in Washington; the colorful Elgin Area Taxpayers Watchdog Committee, in Illinois; and the businesslike Defeat the Levy Twice committees, in Washington, where school tax elections cannot be held more than twice a year.

Metropolitan Nashville Education Association President Jane Dugger was right on the money for pro-school groups when she suggested a Save Our Schools (SOS) coalition for Nashville.

Nationally, education forces have chosen such names as Kids Come First, in Oregon; the Dayton's Future Is Education Committee, in Ohio; and the unwieldy Citizens To Restore Basic Education for Issaquah's Kids, in Washington.

Once names are chosen, there are attempts to solidify coalitions of pro- and anti-school spending forces, with the former group seeking to enlist parents and civic groups such as chambers of commerce and the latter group typically seeking allies including senior citizens and (where property tax is at issue) real estate interests.

In past years, some anti-school groups attempted to keep their membership secret, as was the case with a Cottage Grove, Ore., "underground committee" which claimed to conduct well-organized activity against a school levy but said its members feared harassment if their names were known.

More recently, with the popularity of anti-tax crusades increasing, there has been as much publicity involving the names of those who oppose school spending as for those who endorse it.

Once groups are organized, fund raising activities begin, and the spending in an election involving school finances can be heavy.

George Brown, communications consultant for the Michigan Education Association, "had the pleasure of spending more money than I ever spent in my life" on the teacher union's campaign against three November ballot measures that would have affected school spending.

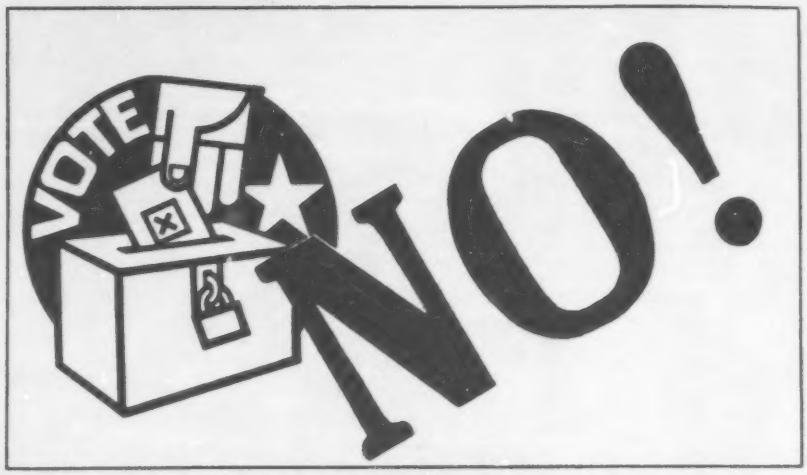
Warren Culver, the group's associate director-Public Affairs Division, said MEA, spurred by passage of Proposition 13 in California, spent about $600,000 on its campaign against the issues, two of which were defeated.

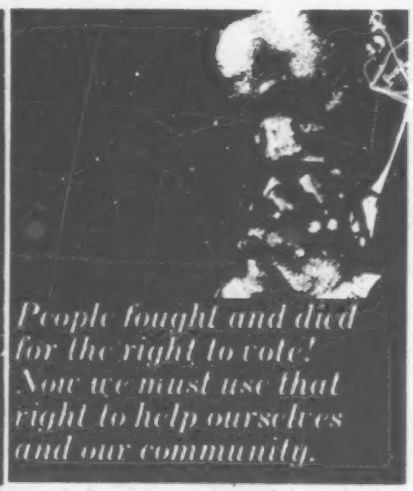
The massive spending, which included $50,000 from MEA's parent National Education Association, was necessary because "voters needed a tremendous amount of education," Culver said.

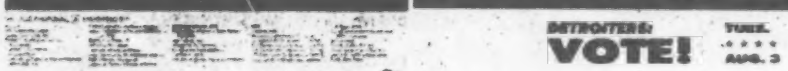
Even local campaigns can involve fairly heavy spending, as when a Toledo, Ohio, coalition raised $70,000 for a levy promotion in one week.

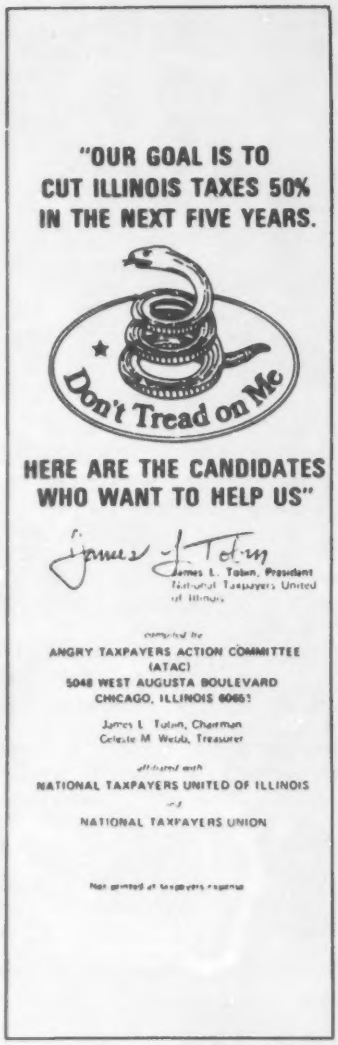
Freeman A. Flynn, director of the Detroit school system's Division of School-Community Relations, said the system's staff has contributed more than $175,000 to five school tax campaigns over the last two years.

The money raised is spent pri-









Handouts for school tax elections range from the basic to the sophisticated: Clockwise from upper left, are a broadside urging "Vote No;" a handout that borrows the revolutionary "Don't Tread on Me;" an evocation of the memory of slain civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King; and an appeal to sports fans.

marily on media campaigns, which include flyers, bumper stickers, buttons and paid newspaper, television and radio advertisements.

At times those advertisements can backfire, as in the case of a Dayton, Ohio, radio commercial which so offended an Appalachian group that it was withdrawn in less than one day.

The ad, designed to dispel the image that Appalachian residents of Dayton — who had often opposed school taxes — voted as an unthinking group, featured what local newspapers described as "a twangy-voiced Nashville actor" who used derogatory terms such as "briars" and "rednecks."

"Now they say we're gonna vote down the school levy," the commercial said. "That's a crock. I'm voting for it because a better education is what'll get my young'uns better than I got. They might know what to call us, but they sure don't know us."

Other advertisements, featuring endorsements from popular athletes, political figures or labor leaders, have been received more favorably among groups targeted by the pro- and anti-school spending forces.

It is in targeting likely pro and con voters that the tax election campaigns most closely approach contests for public office, and school systems have increasingly turned to political campaign specialists and opinion research firms for help in advancing their cause.

Educators' journals are filled with "how-to-do-it" articles giving tips gleaned from successful campaigns, although professional election analysts say such advice is often useless, because it is based on specific local situations that would be unlikely to occur in other areas.

Public relations agencies and consulting firms increasingly do business with school systems trying to improve their images at tax election time. For example, Washington's former state Republican chairman, C. Montgomery Johnson, has established a consulting business to give advice on how to pass school taxes, and has been retained by several Puget Sound area administrations.

School officials have become increasingly attuned to election analysis, which shows, among other things, that in a majority of school finance elections:

● The larger the turnout, the smaller the percentage of votes favorable to the schools. (Philip K. Piele, director of the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse on Educational Management, said this relationship is increasingly diminishing, with the schools sometimes going down to defeat in elections with small turnout.)

However, Piele said a high turnout is still a bad sign for the schools, since it frequently results from community conflicts which bring out negative voters who usually stay home.

● Younger voters are more likely than older citizens to vote in favor of the schools.

● Blacks are more likely than whites to vote in favor of a school financial proposal.

● The higher a voter's educational level, the more likely it is that he or she will support a school tax.

● A voter who has favorable attitudes toward the schools or education in general is more likely to vote in favor of a school tax than is a voter with negative attitudes.

In past years, voters with children enrolled in the public schools were more likely than voters without children in the schools to support education taxes, but Piele said this is no longer the case.

Both pro- and anti-school spending forces, aware of these generalizations (which do not hold true in all elections), typically conduct pre-election voter registration drives and election day get-out-the-vote campaigns among the citizens considered most likely to favor their respective causes.

Hugh M. Clark, whose Decision Research Corp. has conducted voter analysis for the Columbus, Ohio, school system, said a problem in conducting pro-levy campaigns is that "educators assume the public shares their priorities — that the voters care about things like whether flute is taught or not." Only research can show whether such assumptions are true, and thus, whether they can be effectively used to get out the pro-school vote, he said.

Likewise, "The Taxpayer's Guide to Effective Tax Revolt" warns the prospective tax slasher not to "delude yourself into believing that everybody wants to see spending limitations, tax cuts or balanced budgets." Attempting to change the minds (and votes) of such "weirdos" will be a waste of time, the book concludes.

As a school tax campaign proceeds, it becomes more and more like a political contest, with debates, rallies and heated exchanges of letters to the editor in the columns of local newspapers.

Any conflict concerning the schools that has existed in recent decades — desegregation, declining test scores, school closings and educators' salaries are among the most typical examples — is likely to be aired during those exchanges.

Pro-school forces may conduct parades, as when several hundred North Syracuse, N.Y., students, led by cheerleaders and a high school band, marched through their community last August in support of a tax referendum that would restore extra-curricular activities cut because of two budget election defeats.

Anti-school forces may also conduct rallies. "The Taxpayer's Guide to Effective Tax Revolt" advises would-be budget cutters to "stage media events" such as "a symbolic burning of forms for the target tax."

When it is all over, every likely pro or con voter having been contacted by the respective tax groups, there are usually election-night gatherings at campaign headquarters, where precinct returns are watched as anxiously as they would be by any candidate.

If the final tally is good news for school forces, there are the same delighted screams that would be found among a victorious candidate's supporters.

If it is not, the painful process of budget cutting begins.

Fifth in a Series

JANUARY 1, 1979

Personnel Loses in School Budget Cuts

When a school system's request for funding is turned down, whether at the polls or in city hall, there is only one thing for administrators to do: cut the budget.

"It really forces you to make decisions about what you value and how you set priorities for the dollars you do have," said Jack Thompson, director of secondary education for the Renton, Wash., school district.

AND BECAUSE 80 to 85% of the average school system's budget is tied up in personnel costs, "When all the dust settles, what really happens is that you cut people," Thompson said.

He and administrators across the country agree that most school systems faced with budget pressures attempt to cut personnel not directly involved in basic education.

The result is a fairly standard pattern of cuts — a pattern similar to that begun in Metro last year when the school board was forced to delete nearly $5.2 million from its budget.

CLASS SIZE is generally increased, as is the number of split-grade classes at the elementary level. Music, art and physical education specialists are cut from elementary school staffs, as are librarians.

The central office administration is cut, and the number of nurses, counselors and psychologists is decreased.

"A psychologist comes to our school once a month for six hours, and only two students can be tested in that time," said Columbus, Ohio, teacher Sharon Sims.

"THAT MEANS that during nine months of school, only 18 students can be tested."

Small enrollment classes such as advanced math, science or foreign language are usually deleted from the high school curriculum.

Eligibility distance for school bus riders is increased, and service programs such as driver training or adult education are cut or maintained on a tuition basis.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR activities are some-

times marked for deletion, but the resulting howls of protest from sports fans — often accompanied by offers of community fund raising to support popular teams — make such cuts unpopular.

Decreases in the number of building workers causes deferred maintenance — a practice administrators admit will be expensive in the long run because, to cite one frequently mentioned example, roofs may rot and need total replacement if leaks are not repaired as they occur.

Textbooks are replaced less frequently, and the amount spent on library books declines.

PROGRAMS MANDATED by state and federal law, such as special education, must be continued, and many administrators said privately they fear a backlash from the parents of so-called "normal" children who see standard educational offerings diminish while expensive services to other children are untouched in periods of budget stress.

When financial pressures are so great they cannot be solved by simply cutting programs, the result is the shutdown of a school system — an event that creates shock waves in the communities where it occurs.

"We've got to make a commitment that we won't stand for this," City Manager Phillip Kushlan emotionally told a Cottage Grove, Ore., Chamber of Commerce meeting the day after it became apparent the city's South Lane school district would close for lack of financial support in November 1976.

TWO YEARS later, Kushlan said, "People still come up to me at national conferences, see my name tag, and say, 'Oh yeah, you're the city that closed your schools.' "

But many Cottage Grove citizens were so distressed by the school closing, which caused some homeowners to leave the city and nearly 20% of the high school teaching staff to leave the system, that they formed a South Lane Interested Citizens for Effective Schools (SLICES) committee that continued functioning long past the successful budget election which permitted students to return to their classrooms.

"Looking back now, I see it as a crisis that made the community cohesive," Kushlan said.

IN TOLEDO, Ohio, where schools were closed in 1976 and 1977 after tax election defeats, "The people in this community decided there is just too much pride in the city to let this happen," said Joseph W. Rutherford, administrative assistant in the school system.

Declining property sales caused by negative national publicity caused the Board of Realtors to take out full page newspaper advertisements urging citizens to vote for the school tax increase to protect their own property values, said Edward Schulte, of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce.

"We stopped trying to sell people on the idea that schools were good for kids," Schulte said. "Essentially, we said, 'Get your head out of the sand or you'll lose money because your property values will keep going down.' "

MANY LARGE businesses sent letters urging their workers to support the school tax, the Chamber of Commerce "ran its own ads, and that's unheard of," and in the resulting sense of "total emergency," the tax was passed in November of 1977, permitting schools to reopen, Schulte said.

The national media then turned their attention from Toledo, but a subsequent teacher strike and other events have created a situation in which "confidence in the schools is terrible" and a new superintendent "is trying to build community trust," Rutherford said.

That situation exemplifies the need for continuing efforts to communicate with taxpayers, a need the Detroit public schools have recognized for several years.

"IF WE'RE dependent on the voters, we'd better make damn sure we relate well to them over the long haul," said Freeman A. Flynn, director of the school system's Division of School-Community Relations.

And although the Detroit schools have passed their last three tax elections, thus reversing a trend which led to near bankruptcy in 1973, "We keep trying to build an attitude in all our people that our credibility is measured in every tax election," Flynn said.

Thus precinct returns from every school tax election are carefully analyzed, and principals of schools whose voters did not support the increase "are encouraged to improve relations with their communities," he said.

THE HIGHLINE, Wash., school system halted a period of school tax loss partly by involving citizens in a series of community meetings "where people were asked to list their priorities for education and then cut the list by one-third," said Administrative Assistant Kenneth L. Calkins.

"We had to do it, so we wanted them to participate in the process."

That is similar to the thinking of officials in Columbus, Ohio, where voters have not approved new education revenues since 1968. As a result, schools remain open only because of borrowing from a state emergency loan fund.

THE SYSTEM is in the midst of a massive "Choices for the 80s" project, which began with delivery of a report on the status of the schools that was distributed to every household in Columbus.

As a result of community hearings and questionnaires, a list of the most pressing problems confronting the Columbus schools has been prepared along with a list of alternative solutions and their exact cost in property taxes.

"It is true that we are in a desperate financial state and that this is the vehicle we are using to broaden community support for a levy," Superintendent Joseph L. Davis told a November meeting of Columbus citizens.

"BUT WE have a broader purpose — to increase the involvement of the entire community with the schools."

It is a purpose Columbus will share with cities across the nation, including Nashville, as they attempt to define what schools will be able to accomplish in an era of declining resources.

Programs Deleted

Public's Wishes Seen Dominant In School Cuts

After 21 consecutive school tax election defeats, Federal Way, Wash., principal Donald Swanson says his district "is finally getting around to doing what the public wants."

"For a long time, I felt I was the educator and the public should do what I say," said Swanson as he described cuts in the district's budget.

"NOW I feel, and without bitterness, that we're finally doing what people wanted us to do all along."

As one example, Swanson pointed to the architecture of his Brigadoon Elementary School, which won a national award in 1971 for its innovative "open-classroom" design.

The only problem, he said, was that parents objected to the design so strenuously that unsightly wooden partitions have since been erected within the formerly open rooms.

"WHEN WE cut kindergarten reading materials, we had complaints, but I got no complaints that kindergartners weren't singing," Swanson said.

"Sure, we're missing programs, but we have reading, writing and math, and that's what people want."

His sentiments were echoed by G. R. Bowers, Ohio's assistant superintendent of public instruction, who said, "Some of the most fundamental progress in education can be made in times of economic crisis.

"IT CAN'T be made at other times because school leaders don't have the clout to cut programs during periods of expansion."

And while "cut" is a dirty word to some educators, Bowers said, many offerings deleted under budget stress are "ancillary programs that were launched as a result of riots and rebellions in the '60s and early '70s, when we made the sorry mistake of trying to provide a curriculum for everyone.

"You could argue that cutting them hurts Johnny or Susie, who's only turned on by a mini-course, but that's hard to measure.

"MANY OF the cuts being made involve things the general public has taken offense at — courses like 'Death and Dying' — and if you reduce all of this, you haven't affected basic education at all."

Not everyone agrees, and the board rooms of school systems under severe financial pressure are frequently filled with parents who argue they want more than reading, writing and arithmetic for their children.

Unfortunately for such parents, a declining birth rate and an aging U.S. population have combined to create a voting public increasingly unwilling to support their wishes.

"More and more you hear things like, 'It's not my fault you have a kid — you pay for it,' " said John Augenblick, of the Education Commission of the States' Education Finance Center.

"THAT'S A perfectly acceptable social stance. It's just different from the one we've had for the past 2,000 years."

His observation is supported by the 1978 Gallup Poll of attitudes toward public education's finding that "a surprisingly large number of persons volunteered the comment that people with children in the schools should pay a special tax and that the elderly and those without children in the schools should not have to pay any tax to support the public schools."

Many educators and civil rights leaders charge that such attitudes flourish in cities where the public school population, as in Metro, includes increasingly larger percentages of minority group members and poor children.

AND IT is obvious that some of the cuts commonly made under budget stress affect poor children most.

Decreased library services "are bound to affect children who grow up in families where there's no appreciation for books," said Cleveland school board member Berthina Palmer.

Deletion of elementary school music programs will simply cause affluent parents to send their children to private teachers — a circumstance which probably means that eight or 10 years down the road, high school bands and orchestras will be closed to poorer students.

ALTHOUGH the effects of Proposition 13 on California's public education were diminished this year by bailout money from a large state sur-

plus, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles did order, shortly after the measure's passage, that districts discontinue summer school programs except for handicapped students and graduating seniors.

As a result, many parents went to other agencies and paid $150 for the programs or incorporated groups which offered summer school for a fee.

"What about the parents who couldn't afford $150?" Riles asked a December meeting of a statewide panel considering the future of government funding.

"I AM NOT going to recommend that we forgo summer school next year, because I will not be a party to a situation where those who have get and those who do not have suffer."

That is only one of the issues educators confront as a result of declining financial support. Others include:

● Increased public scrutiny of school management practices.

"We're finding more and more fiscal specialists becoming chief school administrators," said Russell A. Horth, supervisor in school business management for New York's state education department.

New York offers voluntary management analysis to its school districts, and Ohio requires top local administrators to participate in annual state-run workshops on school management.

● Aging faculties, with little opportunity to hire teachers fresh from college.

Administrators say this situation results in higher costs, since salaries increase with longevity in the district, and in the danger of losing innovation, though in the case of good teachers, it provides the benefits of cumulative classroom experience.

● Increased reliance on state and federal funds to fill the gap created by diminished local support.

The problem, educators say, is that such money inevitably comes with strings attached, and in California, where Proposition 13 forced the state to assume approximately 70% of school funding, fears that local control will be lost are frequently expressed.

In Ohio, where the Cleveland and Columbus school systems remain open only because of borrowing from an emergency state loan fund, such fears have been realized.

THE Columbus school board was forced to drop out of a lawsuit challenging the fund's provisions, and both systems were required to cut programs identified by the state as exceeding minimum requirements.

"We're pursuing a course in which minimums tend to become maximums for districts in trouble," said Robert Barrow, the Columbus schools' budget analyst.

One of the major political battles in the next few years is likely to be between citizens who consider that situation appalling and those who believe it's the way things should have been all along.

Last in a Series

JANUARY 3, 1979

Crisis in the Public Schools

Will Schools Be Funded?

In a post-Proposition 13 era characterized by how-to-do-it manuals for tax cutters, it doesn't take a fortune-teller to predict that Metro schools face an uphill battle for financial support.

The big questions are how the battle will be waged, and what its outcome will be.

If the school board seeks additional revenue, either to restore the nearly $5.2 million in programs cut from last year's budget or to increase services, the alternatives are simple.

● Metro Council could increase the property tax, allotting some or all of the resulting revenue increase to education.

● The council could authorize a referendum permitting voters to increase the local option sales tax

Councilman Fred Lowry withdrew a proposal for such a referendum last August after Metro employees, including educators, could not agree on how the resulting revenue would be divided.

A let-the-voters-decide approach this year could be an appealing out for campaigning council members, who will probably face tough salary demands from Metro workers along with the school system's requests.

● Under a never-used provision of the Metro Charter, the school board could call its

Councilman McPherson
Enough anti-power?

own referendum on a sales tax increase.

That option, which the board considered exercising during last year's budget controversy, would force the schools to seek voter support alone, since revenue resulting from a successful referendum would be earmarked entirely for education.

However, board vice chairman George Cate said "it is still possible" the board will initiate a tax increase election, "depending on the mayor's and council's reaction to this year's budget."

In any of those alternatives, the school board would be seeking an increased budget, but other scenarios are also possible.

● The board could submit a budget which does not exceed projected revenue — a document which, if past years' experience is any guide, would involve cuts in staff and programs.

Fulton, who will probably be campaigning for re-election during the budget period, would clearly prefer this alternative, and he predicted that "the school administration will bring us a more realistic request than in the past."

Given the sympathy with which the system has greeted parents' requests for more services in recent years, Fulton's assumption appears highly optimistic unless his recent school board appointees share his thinking on the budget and vote accordingly.

● Councilman Bill McPherson could gather enough signatures to place a sales tax repeal referendum on the August 1979 ballot.

A similar effort failed last fall when it was ruled that McPherson's referendum petitions did not have enough valid signatures, a ruling he now says "was probably for the best because we'll put it back on when the councilmen and the mayor are running and will have to take a stand on it."

The repeal referendum, if successful, would cut about $38 million from the education budget, forcing either an early school closing or a shift of funds from other Metro accounts.

But could that really happen in Nashville?

Some Metro educators say no, citing a Vanderbilt University professor's poll showing limited sentiment in favor of tax repeal.

Others privately express doubt that McPherson, who has been a political maverick, can bring off the organizational effort required to pass a referendum.

They may be right, but then again, their comments sound a lot like those many Californians made about Howard Jarvis at this time last year.

And in many ways, the issue of McPherson's repeal referendum is less significant than the broader question of how to garner support for school spending — support that would be equally important in a tax increase election or in efforts to lobby the council for more funds.

If the experience of other urban school systems is any indication, that support will be difficult to come by.

For example, the same demographic factors of declining birth rate and aging population which have diminished the pro-school voting population of other cities exist in Nashville.

The controversies which created tensions that have erupted in other communities' school tax elections — sex education, desegregation, school closings, test scores and educators' pay — have all existed here within the last decade.

In fact, an anti-school speech suggested in the paperback *The Taxpayer's Guide to Effective Tax Revolt* — which concludes with the line, "If the school board and the education association want more money from us, let them show us they deserve it, by seeing to it that our children learn for a change!" — could have been taken verbatim from remarks made here last spring by former Metro Finance Director Kenneth Schoen.

George Cate Jr.
May go to people

Like many of their counterparts in other communities, Nashville educators were slow to recognize the phenomenon represented by the fairly high percentage of favorable response to such remarks — a response supporting National Institute of Education official Denis Doyle's observation that the day of "blind public support" for education has ended.

A pro-school coalition intended to improve community understanding of education services was not formed until weeks after McPherson's repeal petition drive began, and the group stopped meeting when the measure did not reach the November ballot.

A brochure designed to justify school spending to Metro Council was not distributed to members until the beginning of a hearing on the school budget, which diminished the information's impact considerably, since council members had to choose between reading it or listening to Schools Director Elbert Brooks' presentation.

And if the too-little-too-late pattern persists, it will probably be spring before educators try again to lobby the public and council for support of school spending.

While Metro schools share many of the characteristics

that have hampered other systems at the polls or in council chambers, they also differ from those districts in several important ways.

For example, Metro's procedure of appointing its school board has diminished opportunities for the divisiveness that characterize cities where board members are elected on opposing platforms and consistently vote along party lines. In some cities, board members themselves have been divided on the issue of a school tax, with predictable results for an election's outcome.

Metro has also escaped, for the most part, the kind of split within the larger education community that has torpedoed some school tax increases in an exchange of charges between factions of teachers and administrators.

Disagreements between Brooks and teachers or the board, which overruled him on the issue of closing several high schools last year, have not degenerated into lasting bitterness, and when charges such as Schoen's and McPherson's were made against the school system last spring, educators stood united in attempting to refute them.

That was not an easy task, and it has not been completed.

Questions remain, even among school supporters, concerning the quality of education and the amount that it should cost.

Schoolofficials may answer those questions so persuasively that the community endorses further spending to increase and improve services.

On the other hand, they may find that taxpayers no longer want or are willing to pay for the increasingly wide range of services public schools have taken on.

"There will have to be either new resources or a very different definition of what the schools are expected to do," said Deputy Superintendent Charles Frazier.

In the months ahead, Metro citizens will make that choice.

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The Tennessean perspective

NOVEMBER 20, 1978

Illinois Group Aims at School Spending

By SAUNDRA IVEY

ELGIN, Ill. — In what could be the ultimate in school tax revolt, a group which fought an education levy here last spring is mobilizing to put a budget-slasher on the school board.

"We've decided to keep the fires going," said Eugene T. Devitt, whose Elgin Area Taxpayers Watchdog Committee claims partial credit for the May 9 defeat of a school tax referendum.

"WE WANT to get control of the seat that's going to be vacant on the school board, and we're looking for a candidate to represent our point of view." (The school board here is elected rather than appointed, and because the board must approve the referendum required for any increase in tax rate, an anti-spending member could fight school issues' getting onto the ballot.)

The watchdog group will be aided by James L. Tobin, president of National Taxpayers United of Illinois, who has been spending as many as five nights a week speaking against tax proposals for public services in communities throughout the state.

Unlike school spending critics who simply call for increased efficiency and lower budgets, Tobin said, "I'm in favor of abolishing all public schools in the country, but we'll have to start in Illinois."

PRIVATE SCHOOLS, he said, "provide superior education at a lower cost per student."

How would low-income families come up with private school tuition?

"That's irrelevant, because by eliminating property taxes, we'll make it possible for people to afford them," Tobin said, refusing to concede that citizens in some income brackets do not pay sufficient property tax for such a change to affect their spending power significantly.

WHAT IS relevant, he said, is that the public school system "is the single most dangerous threat to freedom in our country.

"Basically, they're producing political zombies with a high tolerance for s..t," Tobin said. "Kids are being indoctrinated that they should pay their taxes and they're told things like, 'The taxpayers put you through school, so you should do the same.'"

There are clear echoes of the radical right in such comments, but Tobin, a member of the Libertarian party, said, "I have no political connection with groups like the John Birch Society."

HOWEVER, Ed Shock, president of the Elgin Teachers Association, said many tax foes "are using taxes as a means to an end."

"The old radical right wing is no longer railing away at Communists on our doorstep — they're using social services as a way of getting at their objectives," Shock said.

"I've never heard responsible conservatives advocate elimination of the public schools."

DEVITT SAID his watchdog committee, whose nucleus consists of senior citizens he represented in a pension case involving former employees of the Elgin National Watch Co., does not "go quite as far" as Tobin in criticizing the schools.

But though Tobin is "a little bit of a meat cleaver," he has been useful to the Elgin group because "his name strikes fear into people," Devitt said.

He said Tobin was particularly helpful in the committee's fight against the May 9 tax referendum, in which voters turned down increased spending for the state's third-largest school district by a margin of more than 2-to-1.

SCHOOL SUPPORTERS discounted the influence of organized opposition, saying the no votes on the tax issue were not much greater than in past years' referendums but that the yes vote fell off.

They admitted, however, that dissatisfaction with some aspects of local education were expressed in the voting.

School Superintendent Paul R. Lawrence said the referendum, which would have given the school district its first increase in the education fund tax rate since 1964, failed largely because of "concern for taxes."

ANOTHER contributing factor, he said, was "militancy of teachers" — a reference to the powerful and active Elgin Teachers Association.

The teacher group's seven-day

strike this fall was its fourth since 1971, a record in the state, and the school board's 4-3 vote approving a $1.67 million contract settlement reflected the ETA's pre-election endorsements of board members.

That vote, Devitt and others said, showed that the "union-dominated" board would give proceeds from tax increases to teachers.

BUT ETA President Shock, pointing out that his constituents had received raises of only 2% and 4% in the past two years, said, "Teachers are not this district's financial problem and we refuse to be its solution.

"Even if the community perceived teachers as 'dedicated' and 'self-sacrificing' rather than militant, the referendum would have lost by as big a margin, partly because the property tax is unfair and partly because the school campaign was not organized to get yes voters out," Shock said.

Meanwhile, the school district is projecting deficits of nearly $1 million this year and $2 million to $4 million next year unless a referendum is passed.

OVER THE last four years, the 26,000-pupil system has made about $4 million in cuts to a budget only one-third as large as that of Nashville schools, resulting in loss of elementary art, music and physical education programs and a variety of school services.

The problem, Superintendent Lawrence said, is that many voters do not care about the cuts.

"Some parents complained about the loss of music and art specialists, but some said, 'Let the regular teachers do it,' " he said.

"WE'VE HAD to increase class size, but some parents said, 'My class was big when I went to school.' And when we cut professional development activities, some said, 'Teachers and administrators are gone too much anyway.' "

Unlike some school districts which have "cut athletics to get the voters' attention," Lawrence said, "we've tried not to blackmail or threaten." But cuts in visible programs such as sports as well as big increases in class size may lie ahead, he said.

"Considering the total tax bill, that we're becoming an older country in terms of average age, and such things as teacher strikes and a questioning of the value of education, temporarily at least, citizens are not going to be willing to pay any more for education, even though there is a decrease in programs," Lawrence said.

NOVEMBER 5, 1978

Ohio Voters Unwilling To Pay Costs of Schools

By SAUNDRA IVEY
Tennessean Staff Writer

IF Ohio is an example of what happens when voters control the educational purse strings, it may be lucky no school funding questions appear on Nashville's Nov. 7 ballot.

For in Ohio, where the voter approval required before property taxes can be increased to benefit the schools is increasingly hard to come by, students have returned to their classrooms to find these conditions:

● The Cleveland school system, which has been on the brink of bankruptcy for two years, had to take out a $20.7 million emergency state loan in order to open this fall, and, as a condition of the loan, had to cut approximately $14 million from last year's budget.

Formal instruction was delayed, however, by a bitter five-week employees' strike, and when classes began in mid-October, enrollment stood at only 96,000 — down about 12,000 from last year.

Cleveland voters have resoundingly defeated two attempts to increase school revenue already this year, and a third tax hike measure appears likely to fare little better on the Nov. 7 ballot.

● Ohio's state auditor has certified that the Columbus Public Schools, running an $8.9 million deficit for fiscal 1978, will have to close Nov. 22 unless additional revenue is found.

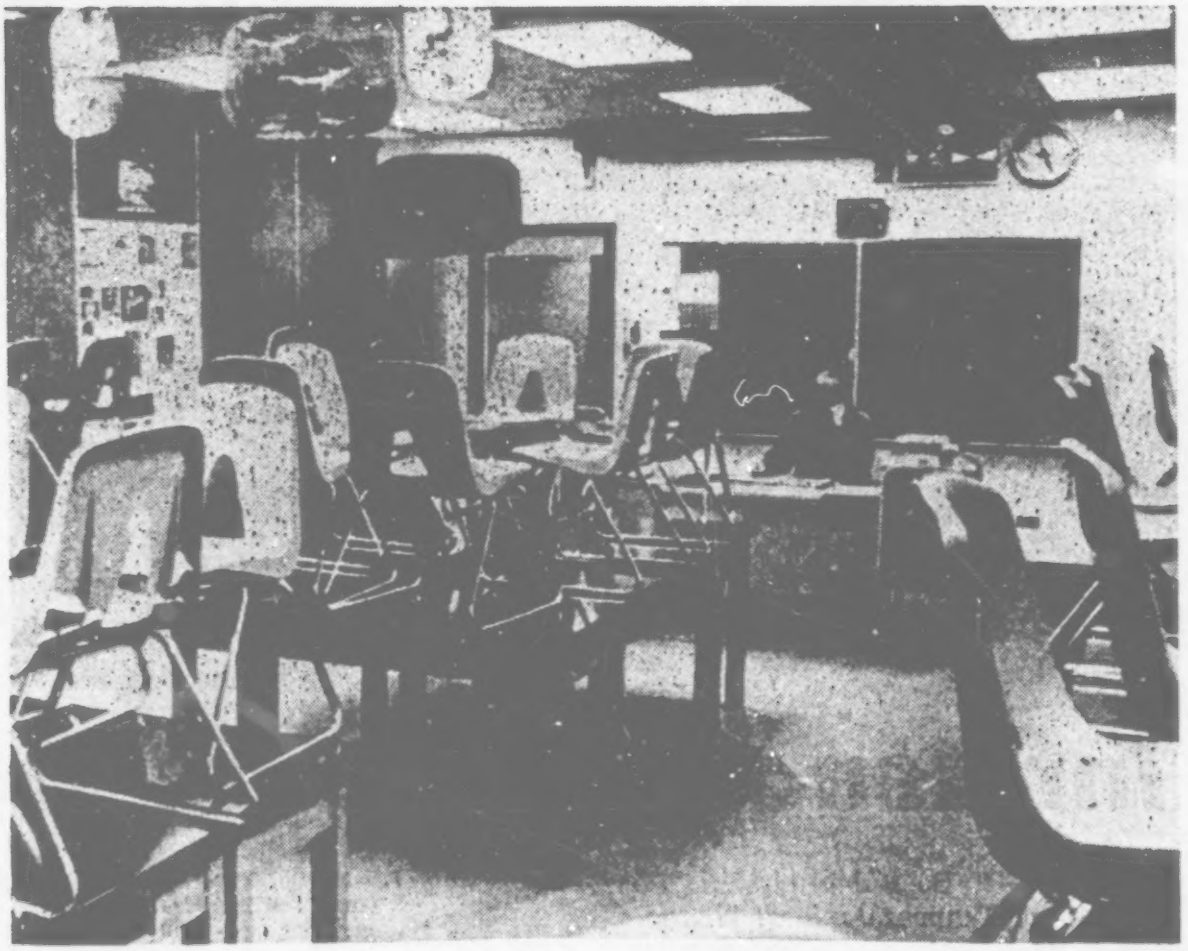
The only source for that revenue is the loan fund from which Cleveland has already borrowed, but school officials, who have already cut spending by $14 million over the last two years, see no way to cut programs further in order to repay the loan. Columbus voters have not approved new local revenue for education since 1968, and the school board, still recovering from its latest defeat (on the June ballot), has not decided when to seek another levy hike.

● School officials in Dayton, where a 26-day employees' strike recently concluded with 29 teachers' receiving jail sentences and being assigned to write essays on "what the law means to me," express little hope the levy on their Nov. 7 ballot will pass.

Three Dayton school levies have been defeated within the last 18 months — the most recent going down 3-to-1 despite a pro-education advertising campaign financed with about $100,000 donated by local businesses.

Officials say they have kept budget slashing as invisible as possible, but that in the next round of cuts, more visible programs — perhaps interscholastic athletics — will be on the line.

● In Cincinnati, where voters have rejected five attempts to increase the school levy since 1969, education officials also participat-



TOLEDO, Ohio -- A teacher sits in an empty classroom after schools were closed for lack of funds.

ed in the ritual of budget cuts and teacher strikes that has characterized large-city systems.

"We cut to the point where there was nothing left to cut without destroying our school system," said Superintendent James N. Jacobs.

Then the Cincinnati school board filed suit against the state, alleging that Ohio's system of public school financing is unconstitutional because the education of children varies according to both the wealth of their communities and the willingness of voters in each local district to tax themselves. Two state courts have agreed.

In some ways, Ohio's school finance minefield is created by laws which do not permit local educational revenue to rise in proportion to increased property valuations, thus requiring officials to seek increased levies simply to keep pace with inflation.

"More pressure is put on voters for school revenue in Ohio than in almost any state," said Bruce L. Gensemer, a fellow in public finance at the Academy for Contemporary Problems in Columbus.

Cincinnati school board member John Rue said bluntly, "It is rare to find one place where so many half-witted things have been wrapped up in one package."

But while Ohio's financial problems derive partly from specific laws, they provide a glimpse of what may be ahead for other states with less direct avenues of voter control, where local governments increasingly curtail school spending and where tax-cutting measures such as California's Proposition 13 are cropping up on more and more ballots.

And though the Ohio schools clearly suffer from the much-heralded "taxpayers' revolt," that revolt appears to grow as much out of community tensions -- some of which exist in other areas, including Nashville -- as out of financial pressure.

Officials say one of those tensions is desegregation, and Dayton school board president William E. Goodwin, elected on the anti-busing Serving Our Schools (SOS) ticket, explained almost triumphantly that each levy defeat in his city is a "vote against the judge."

School spokesmen in Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati -- all in various stages of desegregation litigation, most of it opposed by boards and administrators -- also said the issue causes negative votes on school funding, and their statements are supported by letters to the editor and anti-tax advertisements that have appeared in each city during levy campaigns.

However, some citizens in both Dayton and Cleveland complained that school officials have grossly exaggerated the costs of desegregation, thus inflaming voters and contributing to levy defeats.

In Dayton, Superintendent John B. Maxwell referred to the costs of desegregation, which he pegs at "over $20 million," as "money down the drain."

Dayton school board member Leo Lucas, however, said much of that cost resulted from fighting desegregation rather than implementing it. The latter, he said, "costs about $3 million a year, and 45% of that comes back from the state for transportation."

Lucas said some school officials and board members "prefer not to have their own levy pass so they can say, 'As long as we bus kids, it won't succeed.' "

The plaintiffs in Cleveland's desegregation case told a federal judge school officials would have difficulty passing a levy partly because of their "earlier campaign to lay the responsibility for the financial problems of the district on this court and 'busing.' "

Opposition to desegregation apparently hurts school tax levies two ways — in the no votes of whites who oppose busing and, increasingly, in the no votes of blacks angered by officials' continued resistance to court orders.

In Cincinnati, several black organizations urged a "protest vote" against the November 1977 school levy, and in Dayton, board member Jane Curtis said some black parents told her, "We belong to the NAACP, and you're using our tax dollars to fight the NAACP in court, so I won't support you."

Besides desegregation, Ohio voters have taken issue with what they consider "fat budgets" loaded with "too many administrators," Cincinnati's Jacobs said.

Some state officials have also questioned those areas, and during hearings to evaluate circumstances of 15 Ohio districts which closed early last year for lack of funds, one legislator criticized the Toledo schools for maintaining Chinese in the curriculum despite closing for financial reasons.

"Some of the recent additions to the curriculum have not been substantive in nature, and many are the kinds of things the public has taken offense at," said G. Robert Bowers, Ohio's assistant superintendent of public instruction, citing courses such as "Death and Dying" as an example.

Such concerns contributed to the Ohio legislature's stipulation that before a school district may borrow from the emergency loan fund designed to eliminate early closings, it must agree to reduce programs which exceed state minimums.

"Because of the loan fund, you can't close, but with the loan comes the possibility of restrictions on your local control," said Jeff Pottinger, budget director for the Columbus schools.

"We're pursuing a course in which minimums tend to become maximums for districts in trouble," added Robert Barrow, the system's budget analyst.

Cleveland is already on that course, and board member Berthina Palmer lamented cuts in the number of library aides and in supervision of counseling and enrichment programs.

"Next year, we have to cut another $7 million, and that's when I'm afraid someone may say, 'Let's cut all the elementary school librarians,' " she said.

Officials do not report widespread complaints from parents about the cuts, however, and Columbus Superintendent Joseph L. Davis said:

"People have become accustomed to school as we now operate it. The things we've cut are no longer missed."

But Davis said he fears the Columbus schools are like a man who for years may be "balding," but who one day is "bald."

"How long does that process take?" Davis said. "We still have a good program, but we're losing it a hair at a time."

The question is whether voters care.

"Unfortunately, only a small percentage of voters have kids in the public school system, so this doesn't affect them directly," said Susan Sibbing, who coordinated Dayton's latest unsuccessful levy campaign.

"I don't understand Proposition 13-type voting, because I feel I'm my brother's keeper.

"But in this society, kids are no longer viewed as our most precious commodity."

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL

Milwaukee, Wisconsin APRIL 23, 1979

First in a Series

Judging School's Quality No Mysterious Process

RICK JANKA

In eight years as education writer for the *Milwaukee Sentinel* Rick Janka has received awards for excellence in education reporting from such organizations as the Milwaukee Press Club, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, and the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

As the Milwaukee public schools entered their third year of court-ordered desegregation, concern focused on how to improve the racially mixed schools. Although the goal of quality education was by definition elusive, Janka believed it was too important to go unreported merely because of its complexities. Taking "Achieving Quality Education" as a Fellowship study topic, he visited school programs that were working throughout the country, and met with scores of academicians and researchers. In the following series, and in his Fellowship report, Janka outlines the factors that distinguish good from poor schools and recommends ways in which parents can improve the quality of education their children receive.

After Mr. Janka's study the *Milwaukee Sentinel* devoted its annual "Forum for Progress" to the subject of achieving quality education. Open to the entire city of Milwaukee, the conference offered the public an opportunity to hear from leading educators, scholars, and politicians on the subject of Achieving quality education.

By RICK JANKA

"I just got a high school education and I want my kids to go to college but I just don't understand all the stuff the teachers and principals tell me about education.

"I live in a poor neighborhood with broken windows and rats, but I care about my kids and, so far, they're doing real good. But I need help. When I ask for it, I just don't understand what they're telling me."

That's a dilemma for many parents, not just the white North Side mother of four who called to comment in response to a recent series on education in The Milwaukee Sentinel.

Parents want their children to have many things.

Most of all, they want children to have a good education, because it is the key to so many other things in life.

EDUCATION TODAY: *A Report Card*

How does a parent know whether a child is getting a quality education?

How can parents find out more about the kind of education a child is getting?

I found some answers to these questions during a three month Ford Foundation fellowship during which I talked with educators throughout the country.

I also talked with scores of parents and pupils.

My conclusions are in the form of hints to parents. They will not help a parent find out everything about a school, but they should provide some help on how to start looking at a school.

First, any parent can visit a child's school.

It seems a simple task to contact officials and arrange for a visit. Yet, surprisingly few parents spend time in their children's schools — the kind of time needed to analyze what is really happening there.

Here are some tour tips:

●Call the school as an interested parent, not as a parent out to find what's wrong with a school.

●If possible, arrange for a two part tour, first with the principal and next — at least in secondary schools — with a pupil.

●Do not be intimidated by a principal or teacher who tries to flimflam you with "educationalese," sounding authoritative but never really answering questions.

While a tour with the principal will give you one kind of information, a tour with a pupil will give you a completely different view.

The pupil likely will fill you in on what is good and bad about the school without using four syllable words.

If a school won't permit a pupil tour, that may be the first clue that there is something wrong. The existence of tour guides or monitors indicates that the school gives responsibility to pupils.

On a tour with the principal, there are several things that will help complete a picture of what is happening in the school:

● Remember that the principal, more than the teacher, the school budget or even the neighborhood, has the ability to make or break a good school.

"In schools that have been turned around from problem schools to good schools, we have usually found that the principal or administrator has been the key reason," said Robert Bush, professor emeritus of the Stanford University School of Education, a teacher for 40 years and an authority on teacher education programs.

An exceptionally authoritative principal may run a quiet school, but at the cost of stifled creativity, among both teachers and pupils.

A principal who views his or her role solely as an administrator limits the likelihood of quality education. Without a close and comfortable relationship with teachers, a principal can turn a good teacher into a mediocre one and a mediocre teacher into a poor one.

On the other hand, the power is there for the principal to help turn a mediocre teacher into a good teacher.

The principal can create an excitement geared toward children, not toward whether the teacher is going to get an appointment to the next administrative vacancy.

●Check how the children respond to the principal. Especially in the elementary school, the principal should not be viewed by the youngsters as someone awesome, but rather as a teacher with higher authority.

When you and the principal enter a room filled with children, notice whether the youngsters stop what they are doing to watch you or whether they simply glance up and go back to work.

If they stop what they are doing, it more than likely means a visit by the principal is an uncommon occurrence. Or maybe they are bored with what they're doing and are using your visit as justification to stop.

●When you enter a working classroom with the principal, and it would be good to enter several, note the reaction of the teacher to both the principal's and your presence.

You may be able to detect whether the teacher is comfortable in the presence of the principal. Friction between teacher and administrator often results in poor morale and that directly relates to the classroom performance.

Also, make your own selections of some classrooms to avoid a tour geared only to "favorite" rooms.

●Note whether the principal asks you to help within or outside the school.

If the principal doesn't, turn the tables and ask how you can help. A failure to use your volunteered help indicates unfriendliness toward parents. Most schools that close the doors on significant parental involvement are closing the doors on quality education.

The better schools in the country are using parents as consultants and, in some ways, as teachers.

If you do not volunteer, you are partially responsible for any lack of quality you claim in the education that public schools are giving your child.

●Visit the teachers' lounge. This can provide valuable clues. Such a visit should be arranged in a manner so that it does not appear to be snooping or spying.

Begin a conversation with compliments for the school and then ease into a conversation about the school, its assets, its needs. Especially try to determine how the teachers feel about children in general and about their principal.

In a good school, most teachers will say that they can turn to the principal with a problem and at least feel assured that an attempt will be made to solve it.

●Check the physical atmosphere. Your first impression from the outside will be visual, but a school's neighborhood does not make or break the potential of quality education inside.

Most good schools can be recognized in the time it takes to walk from the front door to the principal's office.

At the elementary level, hallways and classrooms are decorated with the handiwork of pupils. If handicrafts are missing, children are missing the feeling of accomplishment and pride essential to good schooling.

Besides, in rundown schools handicrafts can be used to cover the cracks.

At the secondary level, the decor also should be checked, but a better way to test the atmosphere of the school is to watch for adult-pupil encounters.

A good school will not necessarily be a quiet one. Francis Chase, Dallas Public School consultant and national educational researcher, believes that a quality education requires many criteria. One criterion must be, however, that the children are treated with respect.

"A lot of misbehavior in schools is caused by teachers, principals and other adults, not by the pupils," Chase explained.

"These people encounter a situation and, instead of helping the pupil, they back him into a corner in front of his peers, forcing him to either become ugly in order to obtain the respect of his friends or kowtow to the adult and run the risk of a damaged image."

Teachers Still Hold The Key

This is the second in a series of stories based on a handbook written as part of a Ford Foundation study by Rick Janka, education reporter for The Milwaukee Sentinel. The handbook gives Janka's conclusions on what a parent can look for in a search for a quality school.

Your child is your own. A little human being you can almost mold into your philosophical image.

However, schoolteachers spend more time with your youngster than you do during the adolescent years.

This gives them power ... to buttress your beliefs, nurture the things in your child you couldn't and give your child an excitement about learning, about himself and his future.

Or ... to tear away at your beliefs and bore your child into mediocrity.

This puts a major burden on the teacher who, besides teaching, must be everything from doctor to psychologist, referee to mother.

Milwaukee School Supt. Lee R. McMurrin can remember his days as a teacher when little ones stared up at his robust figure, then called him "mom."

In the course of my Ford Foundation study I interviewed dozens of youngsters in schools considered excellent in New York City, Boston, Dallas and San Francisco.

Most pupils defined a good teacher as one they sensed liked them, was excited about teaching and, most importantly, gave them extra help before and after school.

A good teacher, in the children's eyes, would not knowingly embarrass them in front of other children.

While the principal in your child's school can hold the key to a truly excellent school for your youngster, it is the teacher who turns that key to either open or shut the door to quality education.

Robert Bush, a teacher for 40 years, national expert on teacher training and professor emeritus at the Stanford University School of Education, has said that a good teacher has basically four requirements:

- The teacher needs to be a person the child is comfortable with and who makes the child want to come to school.
- The teacher needs to make the youngster feel that he or she is a worthwhile person.
- The youngster must actually learn something from the teacher.
- The teacher must reflect values that coincide with the parents' values or, at least, do not run directly counter to them.

Telltale indications

And, despite criticism leveled at teacher competency throughout the country, Bush believes that "much, much more is going on today in terms of effective teaching rather than noneffective teaching."

Bush said teachers should use several techniques to make themselves the best teachers possible. Parents can watch for these almost too obvious hints to give them an idea of the quality of their child's teacher.

Bush said good teachers should:

- Create a system of rules in the classroom that will allow pupils to attend to their personal needs, such as sharpening a pencil or going to the washroom, without being forced to significantly disrupt the rest of the class.
- Move around the room constantly while teaching. This will give a feeling of more individualized instruction and maintain the level of attention longer.
- Make sure that assignments given to pupils to work on independently are interesting and challenging and do not go beyond the children's capabilities. Too often, a difficult assignment causes frustration or embarrassment, both of which can diminish self-image and confidence.
- Minimize giving instructions throughout the class day. A daily class schedule provides a structure for each pupil.
- Call on a child by name before asking a question. This will help prevent inadvertently choosing the pupil who seems not to know the answer or the one anxious to answer it. Help should be given without condescension.

Some characteristics Bush applies to a good teacher may be hard for a parent to discover during a classroom visit. Other, more obvious, characteristics can be spotted.

- Note how the teacher responds when you, the parent, volunteer to work in or outside the classroom. A good teacher will welcome a parent volunteer. A teacher unsure of his or her abilities, or who thinks parents are meddlesome, will reject most offers.
- Check classroom design and visual displays available for children to study. A good classroom — one that promotes pride within children — will have displays of the children's work, no matter how simple.

These displays, however, should not be only from the best artists or the teacher's favorite. Too often a child's ambition can be cut by a teacher who constantly refuses to use a pupil's work because work of others is prettier.

All pupils need the feeling of accomplishment whether small or large, artistic or crude.

- Be aware of what the teacher aide is doing. If he or she is constantly watering plants or cleaning, the teacher may be using the aide as a janitor instead of as an assistant.

Proper use of a teacher aide helps children understand everyone has something to offer in education, and frees valuable time for the teacher.

- Beware of a teacher who seeks to know the complete family background of each child. While this does have some advantage for the teacher in helping to determine what special problems or benefits each child has at home, the practice may label children in a teacher's mind.

The daughter of a university professor might immediately be considered brighter than the son of a factory worker who never finished high school.

At its worst, the practice can program one child for success and another for mediocrity or failure.

The teacher does, however, need to know something of the family background and conditions in order to view each child as an individual in a large group of children.

- Be pleased, not offended, if your child must come to school early or remain later for extra help.

In some cities with strong teacher unions, teachers have been instructed not to go beyond work specifically outlined in their union contracts for fear the extra work will set a precedent for future negotiations.

Extra help crucial

Teachers, parents and especially pupils in most schools visited agreed that unless that extra help is given, many pupils will fail and the pupils may get the impression that the teachers view teaching as a job and nothing more.

The Sentinel's recent survey of thousands of pupils, parents and teachers in the Milwaukee Public Schools

substantiated many of the findings of my report.

Parents should remember that the new modes of instruction such as open education and Montessori should not be dismissed simply because the classrooms look disorganized or because they do not fit into the mold of yesterday's classroom.

These techniques do work for certain children, as many of Milwaukee's specialty programs have shown.

Jonathan Kozol, a Boston Public School teacher, lecturer and author, warns, however, that teachers taught under the recent liberalized education methods sometimes try to be too much of a friend to the pupils instead of a teacher.

"It's insane to let each pupil completely choose what he or she wants to do," Kozol said.

" 'They'll let you know when they want to learn about Angola,' is the usual philosophy many of these teachers have. Well, they won't ask for something if they don't know it exists and it's our job to make sure these kids know things exist."

Third in a Series

APRIL 25, 1979

Parents Can Help In Schools

To some teachers and school officials, it's a contagious disease. It's called parental involvement.

Parents should stay at home, some say, and leave education to the educators.

That angers many parents who pay good money to get a good education for their kids. Many parents cannot show off master's degrees, but does this give educators the right to keep them from being involved in their children's lives?

On the other hand, parents often stay away from the schools, using the same basis for their actions. They are paying good money for the school, they say. Why should they have to spend time in the school, too?

And so the conflict is set, with the school as the battleground and the children as the spoils.

My tours of schools throughout the country that were considered excellent places of learning by teachers, parents, pupils and the community showed that parental involvement is a key ingredient of quality education.

The visits proved that parental involvement is at its best when the impetus comes from the school and the principal, not from the parents.

In a recent Milwaukee Sentinel survey of more than 700 Milwaukee Public School teachers, 78% agreed that parents do not take enough interest in their children's education, and 62% said they would like parent volunteers in the classrooms with them.

In the same survey, 31% of the pupils interviewed said their school would be a better place to learn if parents were more interested.

Only one other choice for improvement of schools got a higher ranking from the pupils. Teaching more reading, writing and mathematics was favored by 38%.

Even though both pupils and teachers wanted more parental involvement, 63% of the parents interviewed in The Sentinel survey said they had never attended a PTA meeting.

A total of 42% said they had never attended a parent-teacher conference, probably the best chance they would have to find out how their child is doing in school. The same percentage had never attended an open house at the school building to which their children go 180 days of the year.

One example of a strong parent involvement program was found at the Alamo Elementary School in San Francisco.

Principal Thelma Boyer took the lead and brought dozens of parents into her classrooms, not simply to help with menial tasks but also to serve as teachers.

Her parent involvement campaign first encountered opposition from teachers reluctant to have "nosy" parents looking over their shoulders with every turn of a textbook page.

She also discovered what most school officials find when they seek volunteers: parent apathy.

To combat both the teacher hesitancy and parent apathy, Mrs. Boyer planned a series of parent tours at the school, some during the day and some at night. She guided each one personally.

Mrs. Boyer telephoned parents, sometimes several times, to invite them and to build enthusiasm about the program.

The next step involved the teachers as well as the parents to deal with two of her concerns:

- Many teachers feel parents are not capable of the kind of objectivity needed to educate.
- Many parents feel inadequate in the role of a teacher.

Mrs. Boyer set up a series of workshops for volunteer parents to teach them how to be teachers. The key to the workshop idea was using the school's teachers as the instructors.

Mrs. Gayle Chan, one of the parents, was selected to serve as a volunteer parent coordinator.

Mrs. Chan arranged schedules for the volunteer parents, seeing that projects for which teachers wanted help matched the abilities of the parents assigned.

If teachers had projects they wanted to complete without a parent present, they could be planned in advance, Mrs. Chan explained.

Or if a teacher needed to give extra attention to a group of poor readers, it could be planned that a parent would be there to take care of the other youngsters. Taking care did not mean babysitting, however. It meant full fledged classroom instruction from a trained parent.

The main benefit of the parent coordinator, Mrs. Chan said, was that it prevented parent-teacher confrontations that often destroy a parent involvement program before it gets off the ground.

Mrs. Boyer and Mrs. Chan agreed that the principal should be the one who seeks volunteers personally rather than placing the burden on the parents or community groups.

When the burden is on the parents to come to the school and offer help, an adversary situation usually develops.

The principal or teacher feels threatened when parents suddenly appear asking for a role in the school. Without an advance plan, the school officials probably do not know the parents' capabilities.

Parents likely will be left floundering and will get the impression the school is disorganized and does not care about them.

The parents will feel demeaned and then angry because their talents go unappreciated.

Mrs. Boyer noted that a principal or teacher can make a bad mistake by:

- Soliciting volunteers and then not using the help, causing parents to feel slighted.

●Treating parents as necessary evils by giving them lowly tasks.

One of the greatest advantages of parental involvement, Mrs. Boyer said, is that when a controversy develops it is easier to mobilize parents.

Such problems could develop more frequently in the future because of school budget cuts, she said.

Parent involvement promotes quality education, Mrs. Boyer said, because it:

●Tells pupils that all types of people are interested in them and that each person has something different to offer.

●Gives a teacher more flexibility in curriculum and more time for individualized instruction.

●Gives a school the chance to add programs, because increased parent work in the school frees teachers.

●Promotes better rapport between parent and child.

Fourth in a Series

APRIL 26, 1979

With Proper Approach, Parents Can Change Schools

There are few persons more frustrated than parents standing before a school board.

Many parents spend months, possibly even years, trying to solve specific educational problems for their sons and daughters, only to be thwarted by teachers, principals and their own children.

Then, with frustration turning to anger, they confront the school board.

Again, they can be short circuited by school officials and board members. They fail not because the change sought is bad educationally, but because they don't know how to play the game.

Rules for that game, in city or suburb, often are unwritten. They don't follow the pattern of other governmental units.

You don't work for better education from school boards as you would for better streets from city councils.

Problems involving children provoke more emotions than potholes and uncollected garbage.

This series, with conclusions resulting from visits to schools throughout the country, is designed to help parents become more comfortable in their youngsters' schools.

The dilemma remains, however: What do parents do when they find something wrong?

There are two basic routes. They can be defined as the sugar and spice method and the foot in the door technique.

Either way, it seems a parent cannot do it alone. Sometimes it takes an army.

If a campaign for educational change does not succeed, it is likely the fault of the complainer, according to Francis Chase, Dallas Public Schools senior consultant and a nationally recognized researcher on school quality.

The worst thing a parent can do upon discovering something amiss in a child's classroom is to go to the teacher or principal with clenched fists and a list of demands, Chase said.

"Instead, go to the teacher or principal and say, 'I was just in Mrs. So and So's room and, while I think she's doing fine, I think I might be able to help her out. Is there something I can do?' "

In a delicate situation, and most classroom problems are very delicate, Chase maintains that parents should not put themselves into a situation where they will be rebuffed, especially during their first efforts.

"Approaching the principal with advice on what he or she should do just won't work in most cases," he said. "One of the best entries is to go to the principal or teacher for advice on what the parent can do to help.

"This keeps the teacher or principal feeling he is still in a position of authority. Without that, you'll just lock horns and the cause will be lost."

Chase further suggests that if the problem cannot be solved within the school, the best route a parent can take is up the ladder of authority.

In other words, a problem with a principal might best be handled by an organized group of parents meeting with the head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Again, the tone of the meeting must be conversational, not demanding, or the cause could die after everyone leaves the office.

"Seldom is it best to go directly to the school board with a complaint without going through all of the other channels in the school system," Chase said.

An unexpected encounter with parents at a board meeting may put board members in a position of appearing to lack knowledge about school problems, he said.

Also, bypassed administrators "who may have been a great deal of help to you had you talked with them first" may become enemies.

Anyone who has tried to work for change in schools can attest to the fierce reaction from a school administrator publicly cornered in front of his bosses when he doesn't have the answers.

A simple problem with an individual or a program can develop into a major controversy if parents enter the fray with closed minds, Chase warned.

"The emphasis should be on being tactful, careful in making judgments and to remember you could be wrong," he said.

Some label Chase's suggestion as the sugar and spice method.

When parents or others find themselves between a rock and a hard place, stronger action may be warranted — the foot in the door technique.

However, even those who have succeeded with this method maintain that the first route is cleaner and possibly produces more lasting results.

At Public School 84 just off Central Park in New York City, the foot in the door method worked.

Blanche Gandolf, parent activist who boasts of helping to turn that school away from becoming an educational prison, advises this route only in emergencies.

Ms. Gandolf and her supporters picketed, stomped their feet, took over the superintendent's office and visited the governor in order to get a new principal and to prevent the New York board from cutting 1.5 hours off the school day to save money.

Her story of how PS 84 saved itself from a cut that was forced on all other city schools is an extreme example of protest.

A group of parents literally camped in the principal's office, tying up telephone lines and barring mail delivery for three months.

As a result, PS 84 never formally received the order to cut the school hours. No one could get through to the school.

Attempts by central office administrators to hand deliver the orders failed when parents barricaded the front

door. At one point, Ms. Gandolf was sent flying into the nearest garbage can by an angry school official.

The foot in the door technique almost requires an army of people willing and able to put in long hours and to accept harassment and delay.

Parents and others need to consider two major disadvantages before using this method.

First, the technique no doubt will make enemies of school administrators, board members and others outside the school. This could haunt the protesting group later if it comes back for help in other matters.

Second, there is the likelihood that the media will shower attention on a problem when parents choose the more visible method.

Some persons think this could help the cause, and it is viewed as an integral part of the campaign.

Others feel that in the long run, the media attention could hurt the reputation of the school.

Last in a Series

APRIL 27, 1979

'Re-educating' Teachers May Help Upgrade the Quality of Learning

Quality — that's a term used to describe furniture, home construction or a diamond ring.

It indicates something that's expensive, something that requires long hours of painstaking, detailed work.

So why doesn't education fall into that category?

The taxpayers will tell you it's expensive.

School administrators, teachers and even pupils will tell you it requires painstaking, detailed work.

Yet the word "quality" is seldom followed by the word "education" when talking about public schools.

At the outset of my study for the Ford Foundation, there was some hesitation because of the fear that quality education would be defined differently in each part of the country. Residents of Atlanta would see it as something different than Milwaukeeans do.

The opposite proved true. Every city had it, somewhere in its school system maze, and each school created it basically with the same ingredients — a strong principal, parent involvement and teacher commitment.

The question still remained, however. If some schools have it why don't all of them?

The problem seems to be many sided. In part it stems from a lack of knowledge by the general public. People aren't aware of good schools in their own neighborhoods and they don't know how to become part of an effort to fix the ones that aren't good.

They live with stereotypes about the public schools and simply assume, without investigation, that the public schools are filled with drugs, vandalism and uncaring teachers.

Some of them are, as a recent Milwaukee Sentinel survey of thousands of pupils, teachers and parents has shown.

But some of them aren't and all of them don't have to be.

Not too long ago, schools were in the middle of a baby boom that forced them to expand quickly. Today's problem is what some call the "baby doom" — sharply decreasing enrollments.

Baby boom days created an emergency in the classrooms. Teachers were at a premium and many districts hired them even before they were accredited, without any stringent requirements.

Education colleges were spitting out teachers and the schools were the spittoons.

That's not to say, of course, that good teachers were not graduated in those days. Many of this country's best schools are filled with teachers educated in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The good ones continued their education or were lucky or smart enough to learn in their classrooms day by day.

Protected by tenure

Some other teachers did not. They are still in those school systems. They are protected by tenure rights and they are teaching the children of the 1970s the same way they taught the children in the 1950s and 1960s.

There needs to be a continuing and mandatory re-education of teachers and other school officials. This would introduce them to new teaching techniques and refresh the old ones, but primarily it would help them on how to deal with many of the new problems children and their parents are facing today.

"We need to spend more time re-educating teachers," said Ernest Boyer, US commissioner of education. "I dream of the time when every school will have built into its system a period of time just for the re-education of teachers."

Boyer said that, since schools are not growing, "we're going to have to assume that some exciting things are now possible."

This re-education should not be considered a responsibility of the teacher union or teachers individually.

Sabbaticals or leaves should be paid and monitored. School officials should justify the extra costs not by badmouthing the abilities of the teachers or administrators but by promoting the programs for the good of the children.

Teacher re-education is not something that should be considered only for the baby boom teachers. There are thousands of teachers who came into the nation's classrooms within the last few years after being taught to teach from the "hip" textbooks.

'Freedom' overstressed

They overdosed, if you will, on freedom in the classroom. They, too, need a re-education, not because those methods are wrong, but because they are not the only methods.

In fact, teacher and author Jonathon Kozol of Boston blames the baby boom teacher and the new "hip" teacher for reading failure in today's children.

"To me, these types of teachers are responsible for failure," Kozol said. "Neither of them, I think, is capable of teaching reading. They are not incompetent people or evil people. Just people who are products of miseducation in the education schools."

The "hip" teachers, Kozol said, are "almost afraid to be teachers. They think they have to be buddies or pals."

While the re-education program would improve the teachers and administrators already in the system, a new emphasis is needed at the university level where they all first learn to teach.

Teachers graduated today are sometimes not prepared for the problems they will find in classrooms.

These problems result not only from mainstreamed special education children and the needs of minority young-

sters, but also the increased pressures children have from broken homes, television, drugs, working mothers and child abuse.

Again, Kozol:

"The need is not for teacher workshops where they can get paid to hang around on a Tuesday afternoon after school for some halfbaked session in the teacher lounge.

"What's needed is possibly a paid sabbatical to re-energize them. After all, isn't it better to teach people to do a better job than to make teachers accountable today for teaching the way we (education schools) stupidly taught them to teach yesterday."

Dismissals tough

With increasingly tight teacher contracts, the likelihood of dismissing a teacher for "mediocrity in teaching" is almost nonexistent.

Re-education would be a way to offset that problem.

Also, good teachers need extra compensation. In today's schools there is a disincentive for the good teacher to remain on the job.

As James Guthrie, professor of education at the University of California in Berkeley and a Berkeley School Board member, noted:

"The further a teacher can get from students, the more money he makes, the greater the prestige, the more time he has and the less accountability he has.

"The teacher is at the bottom of the pole, with the really able teachers being siphoned off to other jobs and wanting to go because the benefits are better."

Re-education of all teachers will help offset future problems and promote quality education.

However, it is in today's schools that the problems already exist. It is there that parents want some answers, changes, kept promises and involvement.

During the three month fellowship, I visited cities around the country and interviewed hundreds of educators, pupils and parents. The study has outlined several components to quality — the principal, teacher commitment and parent involvement.

The integral ingredient is the principal, who has the power to foster the teacher commitment and create the parent involvement.

Quality education exists in the public schools but it will spread throughout the system only with the close involvement of parents and the constant re-education of teachers and administrators.

On the bottom line, the achievement of quality education in every school is unlikely because it would be a complex, expensive and time consuming effort.

However, quality education is achievable and is being achieved in a patchwork pattern around the country. This brings hope that, school by school, it can happen.

ST. LOUIS
SENTINEL

St. Louis, Missouri MAY 17, 1979

FUTURE OF BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: CAN THEY SURVIVE?

ETHEL PAYNE

During 25 years as a reporter, columnist and newspaper editor, Ethel Payne covered most of the events for which this century will be remembered. Throughout this distinguished journalistic career she maintained a deep interest in and concern for the country's black colleges which had educated so many of the black leaders she wrote about.

Convinced that a number of current conditions posed a threat to the future and well being of these schools, Ms. Payne undertook a Fellowship study program designed to describe and document the contributions of black colleges to society, assess their current strengths and weakness, and define the challenges they face in the years ahead.

The following articles are the first of a 12-part tabloid series based on Ms. Payne's work to be published by the *St. Louis Sentinel*. The results of her Fellowship study have also been published by Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. in a monograph entitled *America's Black Colleges: Roots, Rewards, Renewal.*

EDITORIAL

Purpose Of Series On Black Colleges and Universities

By Mike Williams
Editor/Associate Publisher

Black colleges and universities, like the Black churches and Black press, are the bedrock of the Black experience in America. These institutions of higher learning have trained virtually all of the Black leadership, in addition to educating more than one half of the undergradu[illegible]es.

And as you know, this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Board of Education. And its impact on maintaining Black institutions and integrating other institutions of higher learning is slowly being eroded. Therefore the Sentinel has decided to do something about the critical situation.

Recently, Ethel L. Payne, Sentinel Columnist and former Associate Editor of the Chicago Defender and commentator of the CBS Opinion Program, "Spectrum," was one of 13 Ford Foundation Fellows in Educational Journalism for 1978. Her chosen topic was, "Future of Black Colleges and Universities: Can They Survive?"

After extensive research on the above topic, the Sentinel is prepared to publish Ms. Payne's findings in a ten (10) part series that will consist of ten (10) monthly tabloids. Each tabloid will provide an up-to-date perspective on the 105 historically Black institutions of higher education in this country. In the course of her extensive investigation, Ms. Payne has visited 19 campuses and conducted interviews with 44 persons who have a direct involvement in post-secondary education.

Today, these schools are facing a new crisis in their existence. They are especially threatened by three forces, (1) the economics crisis brought about by inflation, (2) mergers and (3) the enrollment crisis caused by the reduced number of college-age youth; that today primarily affects white institutions of higher learning, but in the near future, will surely adversely affect Black schools.

Also, three other factors contribute to the economic problems of Black colleges and universities. These include insecurity caused by international

unrest and a jittery stock market which provides a devastating climate for fund raising for white institutions, which in turn makes these institutions seek more funding from the federal government and subsequently, they infringe on federal funds that historically have been available for the Black schools.

Second, an inability to pass along the raising costs of utilities, insurance and other fixed expenses to the student and his parents. Third, the cash flow problems and the cost of borrowing money is inescapable since there is no steady flow of income throughout the year.

The above cited examples adversely affects all institutions of higher learning, but Black institutions are more severely affected because of the existing lack of resources.

A recent study, completed by the UNCF, (United Negro College Fund), endorses the vitability and need for Black colleges and universities to survive. Statistics released by the UNCF, show that first-time freshmen at the Fund's 41 schools rose 12.4% between 1976-1977, while predominantly white colleges nationally were reflecting a 0.8% drop over the same time period.

UNCF schools continued to show an increase in total enrollment, a cumulative increase of 12.6% over the years 1975-1977. "These trends indicate the awakened interest on the part of Black youngsters to a college education," and especially an education at a historically Black College," Christopher F. Edley, UNCF Executive Director, said.

Beside the enrollment increases, the figures reveal a grim struggle with personal finances on the part of individual students and their families. About 40% of the UNCF students come from families whose annual incomes are less than $5,000. Some 75% come from families with incomes under $10,000. It is reported that the number of needy students on predominantly-Black campuses varies, from a low of 20% to a high of 95%. By contrast, only 15% of the students in private colleges nationally come from families earning less than $10,000 a year. The aforementioned startling statistics show that without the existence of Black colleges and universities, the majority of Black students would not be afforded a college education.

Black Colleges in America: Challenges and Changes

Editor's Note:

There are 105 historically Black institutions of higher learning in the United States, of which approximately half are state supported colleges—the others, privately controlled. As the cost of education continues to escalate, these schools which have always been strapped financially are feeling the pinch even more.

There are other problems, including student aid, faculty recruitment and upgrading and the pressure of competition from the larger, predominantly white institutions for students of exceptional ability.

How the Black colleges will meet these and other challenges is a matter of great interest which shall be explored in depth by the SENTINEL in a series written by Ethel L. Payne. You will not want to miss this provocative study. See page 2 for an editorial that contains a more indepth analysis of this tabloid series.

By Ethel L. Payne

May 17th will mark the 25th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision ending segregation in public schools. Although the Brown vs. Topeka suit was focused on elementary and secondary schools, its impact has been felt by higher institutions of education, specifically by the 105 historically Blackcolleges of the nation.

Today, these establishments, many of them dating back to pre-Civil War times are in a protracted dispute with the federal government over the question of support. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has issued stringent new guidelines under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Since most of the black colleges depend heavily on Title III monies, their fear is that disqualification under the new rules will effectively force them to close down as part of a general conspiracy within government.

Last summer, HEW secretary Joseph Califano, in an address to the predominantly black National Medical Association warned that these schools would have to be prepared for more belt tightening and greater competition for a share of the shrinking federal pie. "Federal assistance," he said, "should help to foster independence, not dependence. It is not healthy for the federal government by virtue of its role as financier to have a life or death power over these schools."

The issue has become highly political and potentially explosive for the Administation, despite Carter's assurance to the presidents of these colleges that he is committed to their continuance. Although the majority of the 220,000 black college students in the country are attending predominantly white institutions, there is a strong emotional attachment to black colleges among the 25 million Blacks in America. Half of those earning bachelor's degrees come from black colleges.

Part of this devotion is due to their historic role in educating thousands of black leaders when segregation was the legal order of the day. The roster of notables reads like a Who's Who and includes such illustrious names as U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall, who 25 years ago argued the case before the high court on behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Patricia Roberts Harris; former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan; Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta; author Alex Haley; Nobel Prize Winner Martin Luther King Jr. and CBS Anchorman Ed Bradley. Dr. Michael Winston, director of Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard University, points out that the two major institutions which Blacks have developed are the black church and the black college.

In the wake of the Brown decision overturning the principle of separate, but equal and the advent of affirmative action through every facet of American life, there is a strong body of opinion that black colleges are obsolete relics of another time and place and are no longer feasible.

Dr. William Turner of the Institute for the Study of Educational Policy in Washington, D.C. poses the question, "Are black colleges needed any longer? If the answer is no to the question, how soon should we arrange a quiet and respectable funeral and say over each one of them...'Well done, thou good and faithful servant?

The battle lines have been drawn and the arguments on both sides have intensified. Arranged against the Califano position are individuals like Vernon Jordan, president of the National Urban League, and the patriarch of black educators, Dr. Benjamin Mays, president emeritus of Morehouse College. Such organizations as the United Negro College Fund which supports the private colleges and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, the umbrella organization of all the black colleges, are strongly opposed to cutbacks.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, because of its commitment to total integration across the spectrum of American society, has had to adopt a middle of the road stance in the argument. It must not offend the vast constituency of support represented by the black colleges and their administrators; yet, recently, Michael Meyers, director of research, policy and plans for the organization, publicly labeled the defenders of the black colleges as "ethnic chauvinists and paternalists, who are advocating a recycled verstion of the discredited separatism of the past."

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund, a separate body from the older group, began challenging the Department of Health, Education and Welfare on its failure to enforce court rulings on desegregation of state higher education systems back in 1970. Adams vs Richardson (Elliot Richardson was then Secretary of HEW) was a class action suit. 1 It argued that the department's failure to carry out the 1964 civil rights ruling under Title VI ensured racism and a dual system of public higher education that was both costly and wasteful. Since the action, the suit has dragged on through appeals with the substitution of Richardson's name for that for each succeeding secretary as defendant. Now, it is Adams vs. Califano and the litigation continues.

Jordan, puts it bluntly, "If the black colleges did not exist, we would have to

invent them...their utility in the American educational process is as great now as it has been historically in the past."

Alan Kirchner, research director for the UNCF says, "Califano's speech to the NMA was to show that he was not all wrong, but he had to crack down on abuse and fraud. The problem is that in the context from which he was speaking if you think about Harvard University it is just as dependent on federal funds as are the black colleges....This symbolizes the insensitivity of the federal government."

But, Dr. Daniel Thompson, vice president for academic affairs at Dillard University in New Orleans, says, "The image of black colleges is a replica of the negative image of black people in America....Black colleges were founded for no other reason on earth but that black students could not go to white schools...All of the southern states have one or two (public black colleges) and they are operating illegally. They should be out."

There is indeed a gradual takeover by some states of formerly all-black institutions. The changing color composition can be seen most dramatically at these once-black colleges which now have a majority of white students; West Virginia State, Bluefield State, Lincoln University of Missouri, and Arkansas State at Pine Bluff, Delaware State, Bowie State in Maryland and Kentucky State have white enrollments of from 30 to 40 percent. Tennessee State is undergoing a complicated court-ordered formula for merger with the University of Tennessee at Nashville.

TSU was founded in 1909 and today has an enrollment of approximately 4,160. It has a 460 acre campus with 47 buildings. This contrasts with UT which is located in a downtown building in Nashville. The school was established shortly after the 1954 Supreme Court decision as an "escape hatch" for whites who couldn't afford to go to the main university at Knoxville, but who did not want to attend the predominantly black school.

The problem with desegregation of the state controlled higher institutions of education is in coming up with a suitable plan for student integration, and to somehow achieve balance. Faculty integration at black colleges has always outstriped pupil mixing, even in the days of de jure segregation. The end result of merger is very often a white "blitzkrieg" of students and faculties. In Atlanta, D. F. Glover testifying before the National Committee on Blacks in Higher Education told this allegory to illustrate his opposition to the proposed merger plan for three historically black institutions in Georgia. "The ole fox and several of his friends were standing at the foot of a hill in the forest talking. They noticed there were several tracks leading to a hold in the hill. The ole fox said to the others, 'I'm going in and see what's happening.' He went in and after several moments he came back out, but he had some broken ribs. He had a broken leg. He had lost some teeth. He had lost an eye. He had lost his tail. In fact, he was all messed up.

The old fox said to the others. 'I have one message for you. Never go in a hole where all the tracks are going and none are coming back./"

The plan which generated much heat on both sides concerned Albany State, Savannah State and Fort Valley State with white schools under a court-ordered ruling in the suit brought by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Dr. Elias Black, chairman of the Committee and president of Clark College in Atlanta, said the white institutions were created by an "immoral, sinful and racist" act of the board of regents. "You can't get justice out of the decision unless you go back to where the injustice started," he declared.

Many educators, black and white, agree with Blake's contention that with merger, the predominantly black schools will be swallowed like Jonah by the white whale. The result will be a sharp decrease in the numbers of black high school graduates entering four-year collees. About 17,000 Blacks are earning degrees now at the black public colleges.

"One recent merger that suggests similar trends is that of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (formerly Arkansas A&M) with the predominantly white University of Arkansas in 1972. When Arkansas A&M was merged with the University of Arkansas, the then president of Arkansas' only black public college, Dr. Lawrence A. Davis, lost his position. Dr. Davis expresses his suspicion of Arkansas' lack of commitment to public higher education of Blacks by saying:

'.....It's inevitable, just as inevitable as the sun will go down this evening that the school will also become predominantly white...because now the whites feel that, if they must control.

Furthermore, there is a determination not to permit this school to integrate and retain a black administration. And in time as the administration becomes white, the faculty will also become white. I don't think there's any question about it." (Slater, 1972) 2.

The trauma of integration and the unique role of black colleges was exemplified by the conference held in separate two-day sessions in March and April 1976 at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. It was sponsored by the Harvard Black College Conference Project with the support of a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

The book on "Black Colleges in America: Challenge, Development and Survival," was one outcome of the conference. In the preference to the book Charles V. Willie and Ronald R. Edmonds, the editors, described Harvard's record on integration of Blacks at the faculty level as 'unfortunate." But they said, "It was an excellent setting from which to launch a major investigation into black education and the education of Blacks under the direction of black scholars."

As we expected, emotionalism ran high at the meetings. As Willie and Edmonds described it, "The story they told of black colleges as well as the way they told it was impressive. Such enthusiam and joy as that which greeted Benjamin Elijah Mays (who led Morehouse College for 27 years) when he was introduced to the conference was an unusual demonstration for a Harvard audience.

A three-hour session led by Mays and Samuel DuBois Cook, his former student and a classmate of Martin Luther King, Jr., who is now president of Dillard University in New Orleans, prompted a staff member of the Harvard News Bureau to say she had not heard such superb speaking ever– any time, any place. As the speaking not good, someone chimed in, "Yes Lord" and an "Amen" was heard here and there, from time to time. Such response reflected not only the religious background and the oratorical splendor of some of the conference speakers, but also the excitement and inspiration generated in the audience."

Underlying the Harvard Conference was the resentment of the critique of black colleges made by Harvard sociologists, Christopher Jencks and David Riesman a decade earlier in which they had called these schools "academic disaster areas." Riesman publicly stated that his characterization of these schools would not be the same now as in the past.

Education has always had a special value for Blacks. It is not only a means for better employment, but it is in elevation of the individual psyche. In a society where race penetrates every facet of daily living, self-confidence is the sword and shield of survival. When the burdens of poverty, ignorance and discrimination crush aspirations, the end result is the destruction of perceived self-worth.

Yearning for education can be traced back to the arrival of the first slave ships in America. Even in bondage ingenious ways were found to acquire basic skills of reading and writing. Alex Haley's epic, "Roots" portrayed the plight of Kizzie, daughter of Kunta Kinte, the progenitor, who was sold away from her parents when it was discovered that she had secretly learned to read and write.

At the beginning of the Reconstruction period, following the Civil War, there was a rush to establish schools to train the thousands of ex-slaves who faced an uncertain future. Of the 4½ million freed persons, there were only 28 known black college graduates and most of them were educated abroad. Northern whites missionaries poured into the south to teach Negroes. In general, they favored the European style of classical learning, tempered by the pragmatic concerns of manual training.

But the advocates of liberal arts versus ther proponents of industrial education clashed. By the end of Reconstruction, and white Southern re-domination, the Yankee invaders who were accused of polluting the minds of their Negro pupils with dangerous ideas of equality had been routed. The Capon Springs, Va. Conference of 1896 firmly established segregation in education and in all areas of life.

Hampton Institute in Virginia was established in 1868 by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong with the aid of the American Missionary as an agricultural, normal and industrial school for Negroes. It became the prototype for the concept of industrial education for the freed slaves.

Booker T. Washington, a graduate of Hampton, exported this brand to Alabama where in 1879 he became principal of Tuskegee Institute. Almost immediately, he struck a bond of

accord with whites in promulgating his philosophy of conditioned separatism. He was able to mobilize enormous financial support from both northern industrialists and southern sympathizers. In the 34 years that he presided over Tuskegee, the school grew from two ransackle classrooms to 100 well-equipped buildings, more than 1,500 students, a faculty of nearly 200 teaching trades and professions and an endowment of approximately $2 million.

Washington became the most acclaimed person of color in America, and his fame spread abroad. He was renowned as an orator and was the author of many books, including the best-selling autobiography, "Up From Slavery." He preached self reliance and subservience to the system of white supremacy to his fellow colored Americans. His public speeches which endeared him to the hearts of the preservationists were laced with homilies as "In all things purely social we can be as the separate fingers, yet one as the hand."

Perhaps his most famous words of advice were, "Let down your buckets where you are." They were the rallying call for the former slaves and their offspring to take what was before them and make it productive, and to turn away from the importunings of such militants as Frederick Douglass, the great abolitionist who said, "Agitate, agitate, agitate." Booker T. Washington left his imprint upon education so that even today, the debate continues over the merits of industrial education.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois was diametrically opposed to the Washington ideology. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1868, he was of Negro, Dutch and French ancestry. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1895 and wrote the first monograph in the Harvard Historical Series, "The Supression of the African Slave-Trade to America."

In 1903, he wrote the classic, "The Souls of Black Folks." It rallied Negro intellectuals against the compromises of Booker T. Washington. DuBois argued that a liberal arts education provided Blacks with the resources for attaining social, intellectual and political equality. He feared that industrial education would foreclose their chances for upward mobility in American society. It would require them to give up political power, abandon their insistence on civil rights, and withdraw demands for the education of black youth. Washington's philosophy was described as "tacit acceptance of the alleged inferiority of the Negro."

DuBois founded the Niagara Movement. In 1910 it became the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was for many years editor of its official organ, "Crisis" magazine which he built into the leading voice for black liberation.

DuBois advocated the development of a "Talented Tenth" for Blacks. In theory, it was an elitist cadre of scholars, philosophers, scientists and educators who would be the catalysts for formulating strategies to lift Blacks from the bottom rung of the ladder of human aspirations. It became popular among a large segment, eclipsing the Washington quantum of hard work and docility.

Discouraged by the resistance to integration in America, DuBois turned to international affairs. He co-founded the Pan-African movement and later left the United States permanently to live in Africa. At age 96, he died in Ghana where he had taken out citizenship

Gregory Kannerstein of Haverford College in Pennsylvania, notes in a chapter which he wrote for "Black Colleges in America" that the "warring ideologies" of DuBois and Washington have subsequently come together, so that at present black colleges intertwine social, vocational and academic programs in their overall mission to educate for leadership in democracy.

There is an ambivalence among Blacks who are torn between the loyalties to traditionalism of the black colleges and private doubts about the quality of education which they can give. The fact that these schools have produced some of the best graduates in the country in the past are overriden by fears that under the pressures of inflation and underfinancing, they cannot compete with the more affluent white colleges and universities.

A new element has been introduced into the problem. The nation has just about reached zero growth population. The decline in birthrate is proportionately higher among white than it is for Blacks and Hispanics. Hence, white colleges are experiencing a decline in enrollment. To offset this, they are turning to the "black and

brown market" in high school students reaching college age. Scholarships and a variety of financial grants are the enticements. Black educators complain bitterly about the "cap and gown raiders" who are siphoning off the best potential college entrants, leaving the "developing" institutions with those who are the least prepared for higher education.

Charles U. Smith, professor of sociology at Florida Agricutural and Mechanical University says, "Perhaps the most significant characteristic of students at black colleges and universities is that so many are poor. This alone accounts for the fact that many of them choose to attend a black college, where costs are generally lower.

...IN 1972 the United States census reported that black families had a median income of $6,864 per year which amounted to only 59 percent of the median of $11,508 for whites. In 1973 over 28 percent of all black families in the United States had annual incomes below the poverty level.

...If all other things were equal between students at black schools and those at predominantly white schools, the sheer fact of the relative poverty of the black students would militate against their ability to attain the academic achievement levels of whites," Smith says.

In general, the private black colleges are more strapped financially than the public colleges, uneven as state support for the latter may be. Dr. Sherman Jones, vice president for academic affairs of Fisk University in Nashville, says the old time philanthropists who were the biggest contributors are fading away. "The new rich entrepreneurs are more profit oriented. They tend to hang onto their money, rather than give it away."

But there are some exceptions. The Atlanta University Center which provides services to the six black institutions of higher education in the city, recently was given $7 million in Coca Cola stocks by Robert Woodruff, chairman of the board. It is the largest corporate gift ever made at one time to predominantly black colleges. The money will go towards the construction of a $70 million library to be used jointly by the six schools.

Fisk which has been particularly hard-pressed has enrolled in a plan set up by the Equitable Life Assurance Co. in cooperation with the major insurance firms of the country which will gradually build up a substantial endowment fund. The interest from the investments in the endowment will help sorely needed capital improvements.

Another program for strenghtening the school, which has been given an historical designation by the National Park Service, is a $10.95 million fund-raising drive. Phase I objective includes $750,000 from the board of trustees; $1,500,000 from alumni; $2,500,000 from foundations; $1,200,000 from corporations and $3,800,000 in government grants. Another $1,200,000 is targeted from the United Negro College Fund, United Church of Christ, parents of students and other benefactors. The Endowment Gift Opportunities program will establish numerous chairs in distinguished professorships and provide for renovations and scholarships.

The famed Fisk Jubilee Singers in the early days saved the university from collapse with the proceeds from their world-wide tours. Today the needs are so great that it will take much more than this. Much of the incentive for the "Forward Fisk" drive is coming from a host of notables, including graduates like U.S. Solicitor General Wade McCree and Otis Smith, General Counsel for the General Motors Corporation.

The future is not so bright for Meharry Medical College which is just across the campus from Fisk in Nashville. Along with Howard U., Meharry was for decades one of the only two schools in the country training Negro doctors, dentists and allied health professionals Just recently, a new two-year medical preparatory school was announced for Morehouse in Atlanta.

Meharry is so beset with financial and internal problems that it is a question of how much longer it can keep its doors open. On August 1, 1978, when HEW Secretary Califano addressed the convention of the National Medical Association in Washington, he had this to say about Meharry..."The accumulated deficits of Meharry are so substantial that HEW does not today have the combination of funds and legislative authority needed to improve its situation significantly. Guranteeing the survival of Meharry Medical College will not be easy...We will have to develop a sound set of legislative authority needed to improve its situation significantly.

Guaranteeing the survival of Meharry Medical College will not be easy...We will have to develop a sound set of legislative proposals."

Two days later the Secretary put the case even more bluntly to the National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education. He said that if all the monies available at present for medical schools were to be given to Meharry it would not help significantly. The only alternative was for legislative authorization to save the school. That led to a sharp comment from board member Dr. William C. Brown of the Southern Regional Education Board. Said he, "If the Government can bail out Penn Railroad and New York City, it can bail out Meharry."

Actually, the pinch from the aftermath of the successful suit by Alan Bakke against the University of California at Davis Medical School has already resulted in a decrease of applications by Blacks to medical schools and a reduction in the number of those who are admitted. Bakke had charged reverse discrimination. The U.S. Supreme Court in ordering his admission left the door open for preferred minority admissions, but the language is so complicated that there are loopholes for evading it, and most white medical schools are avoiding any further reverse challenges by eliminating preferentials. Thus, the serious shortage of black doctors has been exacerbated. A further entangling question now is that, if in fact, there is to be an exclusionary practice against Blacks and other minorities, then ought not the federal government and the private sector seek to rectify this by beefing up support for the only places which can train personnel to meet the critical health needs of minority communities?

With unemployment among Blacks continuing at a disproportionately higher rate, particularly among black youth, the future of black colleges becomes even more important. Dr. Mays says, "It would be an injustice of the first magnitude if black colleges were to be ended." Dr. Norman Francis, president of Xavier University of Louisiana, puts it more bluntly. He asks, "When will this country ever recognize the fact that it is cheaper to educate a young Black than it is to maintain him in prison? Either we train these youngsters to be productive citizens or they go to jail and end up on the junk heap of society."

Elias Blake sums it up. "The goal of desegregation must not be just to change the racial composition, but to provide more and better education for Black Americans. How long will black colleges go on? My answer to that question is that when we're comfortable with the fact that there is no more racism in American life. When all other institutions are dealing with all Americans in an equitable way, then there will be no need for black institutions."

FOOTNOTES

1 Dr. Jane Smith Browning, **Origins, Development and Desegregation of the Traditionally Black Public Colleges and Universities**

2 Dr. Jane Smith Browning, **Origins, Development and Desegregation of Black Public Colleges and Universities.**

THE SUNDAY SUN
LIGHT FOR ALL

Baltimore, Maryland APRIL 8, 1979

First in a Series

What To Do With Vacant School Buildings?

As Number Of Pupils Falls, What Becomes Of School Buildings?

MONTE TRAMMER

In two years as an education reporter for the Baltimore *Sun*, Monte Trammer devoted considerable time to covering the controversial and protracted process of school closings in Maryland. Although declining enrollments are a national phenomena affecting all of the large city school systems and most of the smaller ones, Mr. Trammer felt there was too little comparative information on the approaches school systems took to this common and continuing problem. Consequently, he selected school closings and declining enrollments as a Fellowship study topic.

In this news series and in his final Fellowship report, Trammer documents the approaches eight cities took to school closings. He deals with such issues as use of school buildings, school funding changes, desegregation patterns and policies, management dilemas and the effects of decline on staffing patterns and students.

An officer of the National Association of Black Journalists, Mr. Trammer has received a number of honors for excellence in reporting.

By MONTE I. TRAMMER

Susan Moore Johnson's comments in 1978 summarize a growing but fragmented national debate over what school systems should do about the declining numbers of their students.

The questions are generally known, but there is no consensus on the answers.

Enrollments are declining in well over half—some researchers say three-fourths—of the nation's school systems. The effects are felt most in larger cities, where there typically are more buildings with surplus space and more social and economic divisions among residents that inhibit public discussion of solutions.

The result is that despite all the national studies and debate during the last five years, no national solutions have been developed. In fact, the most successful approaches appear to be those that take into consideration each area's unique economic, geographic and cultural make-up.

Similarly, any attempt to deal with a community's enrollment decline quickly becomes a case study in the area's diversity and an analysis of which components can be made to meld and which cannot.

In 1970 there were 51.3 million public school pupils in the United States. By 1983, enrollments are expected to bottom out nationally at about 13 per cent fewer.

By 1975, 18 of the 27 school districts that are members of the Council of the Great City Schools, a consortium of metropolitan area school systems that includes Baltimore's, already had dropped at least 13 per cent and still were dropping.

Maryland is one of those states for which National Education Association research predicts a "most severe" decline in pupil populations. Statewide the change between 1971 and 1977 enrollments is said to be 7.9 per cent, but the four largest school systems—Baltimore city and Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties—have record-

The number of pupils in U.S. schools is expected to fall by 13 per cent.

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ed enrollment declines of 3 or 4 per cent a year.

Nationwide, demographers expect the total number of children to begin a slight upswing in the mid-1980's and return to the level of the early 1960's—about 45 million—but to remain too small to occupy all of the building space available in most systems.

This glut of school space results from the post World War II and Korean War baby booms that caused enrollments to mushroom and school systems to embark on a flurry of building to accommodate that growth. In addition, the 1960's were years of educational innovation, and new teaching concepts were incorporated into new buildings.

The reduced birth rate, combined with uncertainty over economic conditions, increased numbers of working and professional women, rising incidence of unmarried couples living together and the continued move of Americans from core cities to suburbia all serve to reduce the pupil population—and all affect large cities most severely.

And it is the large cities, where class differences and racial problems are most acute, that have shown the least ability to deal effectively with declining enrollments.

In the 27 districts claiming membership in the Council of Great City Schools, declining enrollment over the past 10 years has led to an increase in the percentage of minority students.

Higher percentages of black students, a factor often cited when white and affluent black parents move away from a school system, and the cost increases caused by declining enrollment accelerate population migration and complicate planners' efforts to project the effects of enrollment decline.

Armed with information on birth trends, mobility patterns and attrition rates, planners generally have continued to predict with better than 90 per cent accuracy how many pupils will be enrolled in given school districts.

However, they have been unable to predict how much the normal attrition rate will be changed by racial or economic dissatisfaction.

For example, at the beginning of the current school year, 3,000 students fewer than expected were enrolled in the Jacksonville (Fla.) public schools. The unexpected drop in enrollment was blamed on disenchantment with busing ordered in the school district to achieve desegregation.

In Maryland, where attitudes are more stabilized, planners have been able to predict the rate of decline with accuracy exceeding 95 per cent.

When enrollment decline reaches the point that it becomes obvious that the school no longer can be operated efficiently from an educational or economic standpoint, closing underutilized buildings usually is the remedy favored by school superintendents.

Closing a building is less expensive than operating it with less than a full complement of pupils. Otherwise, falling pupil populations can increase the cost of education, to the disappointment of taxpayers who expected savings.

But few neighborhoods willingly give up their familiar schools, and closing plans can pit communities, races and social classes against one another in attempts to save what each often claims is the best school in the system—its own neighborhood school.

The second most attractive response is to reduce class sizes as the total enrollment drops. That alternative typically has the support of parents and teachers but is costly and politically difficult at a time of public demand for lower taxes.

School administrators are beginning to discuss and study the concept of joint use—allowing an acceptable tenant such as a senior citizen center or neighborhood library to use vacant school building space. But the idea has yet to win widespread acceptance because of what administrators perceive to be insurmountable logistical problems.

In 1975 and 1976, a task force in Eugene, Ore., conducted a study of all aspects related to closing underused schools. The object was to compare the benefits of continuing to provide classes in "half-empty" school buildings with the possible consequences and economies of closure.

Although 9 of Eugene's 31 elementary schools were operating at less than 75 per cent capacity, the task force recommended closing none.

"It is clear to the task force that closure of any school would seriously disrupt the texture of neighborhood life. The task force believes that a neighborhood school accessible on foot serves as a vital center for community activities," the final report read.

The body concluded that the financal savings of closure did not outweigh the effects of increased vandalism on a vacant building, the loss of a community focal point and the possibility that children might learn better in a less crowded environment.

Similar decisions have been made elsewhere. Seattle, Minneapolis, Huntsville, Ala., and Montgomery and Baltimore counties in Maryland have minimized or delayed closings because of the possible disruptive effects on communities.

In each area, however, school officials have come to believe that closure is the most economically feasible alternative to rapidly escalating education costs.

The Baltimore County Board of Education recently voted to close five elementary schools, but only after citizen opposition and the unexpected weight of data to be considered forced a delay in the decision a year ago.

In January, the Anne Arundel county school board voted to postpone decisions on three schools for a year when citizen opposition grew to unforeseen proportions.

Stuart Rosenfeld, a senior associate of the National Institute of Education, was co-editor of a study, released a year ago, on the effects of declining enrollment as seen from administrative, classroom, labor relations and fiscal perspectives.

He later concluded that closing schools should be a last resort:

"Many argue for closure on the basis of economy and efficiency. However, it rarely results in lower costs. A 1974 study . . . found that of 49 districts that closed schools, only four actually realized a savings. For the rest, potential savings were outweighed by transportation and new construction costs, decreases in property values and reductions in school support. . .

"Closing decisions are rarely made on the basis of rational arguments. Emotions cloud the issues, and the perceived benefits or losses depend on which outcomes are valued. In truth, the decision ought to reflect the needs of the entire community, needs often met by the alternatives to closure."

Pupil Decline To Last Longer In Maryland

While demographers are predicting a slight upturn in school enrollments nationally by 1984, the picture in Maryland is likely to be one of continuing decline—at least until 1987

Figures compiled recently by the Maryland Department of State Planning show that by 1987, school enrollments statewide are expected to be 735,952, or 20 per cent less than the peak year of 1971.

Enrollment decline began in Maryland in 1970 when Baltimore city and Dorchester, Somerset and Worcester counties enrolled fewer students than they had the previous year.

Since then, the drop has continued, and last September all but six of the state's school systems recorded lower enrollments than they had in 1977.

In most areas, the decline has not been serious enough to merit closing schools, but in the state's five largest systems, school closure or consolidation is either under way or being discussed.

Anne Arundel county recorded an enrollment decline this school year of 2 per cent from 1977-78. Baltimore and Montgomery counties and Baltimore city had enrollments 4 per cent below those of last

year, while Prince Georges county and the state as a whole showed pupil declines of 3 per cent.

Those same school systems project enrollment declines until at least 1987.

When the September, 1978, enrollment figures are compared with the peak-year enrollments, the drop in students ranges from 5 per cent in Anne Arundel county to 24 per cent in Baltimore.

Projected to 1987, the last date for which state figures are available, the enrollment drops for those same five school systems range from 5.8 per cent for Anne Arundel county to 38 per cent drop for Baltimore city.

By 1987, Prince Georges county expects 29 per cent fewer students than it had in its peak enrollment year of 1969; Baltimore county will be down 32 per cent from its peak of 1970, and Montgomery county will have lost 18 per cent of the students it enrolled in its high-attendance year of 1972.

Each of those systems, with the exception of Anne Arundel county, has closed some school buildings, always to the consternation of residents.

Anne Arundel county officials are in the process of studying school space needs for the next five years, and Edward J. Anderson, the superintendent, has said he plans no school closings before September, 1980.

County residents, particularly those who live in northern areas where the enrollment decline has been the greatest, have opposed any school closings and sought help from the state legislature this year.

The General Assembly enacted legislation specifying that no Anne Arundel county schools can be closed without the approval of the County Council and county executive. The measure, which opponents say will effectively prevent school closings in the county, now awaits a decision by Governor Hughes.

Committees studying the fate of the county's schools are to make recommendations in June.

There is no reluctance to close schools in Baltimore county, where the enrollment—106,629—has dropped 1,600 since last October.

After two years of debate, the county school board has decided to shut down five underused elementary schools and convert three others to alternative uses. Residents are seeking to have the board's decision blocked by state education officials, a development considered unlikely.

In Prince Georges county, the school board has been studying 80 schools as candidates for closure. The board expects to vote April 18 on how many schools to close, and preliminary indications are that the number could be as high as 12.

The county closed 10 school buildings in 1977. Along with neighboring Montgomery county, Prince Georges has also been converting surplus schools to other uses.

Second in a Series

APRIL 9, 1979

The empty classrooms—II

Many Areas Are Finding Ways To Recycle Their Surplus School Buildings

Roosevelt High School in Dayton, Ohio—a massive structure with six floors and two swimming pools—is one example of what school systems can do with surplus space.

At one time, the 56-year-old structure served 3,700 pupils but it was closed in 1974 when the enrollment dropped to 1,000.

Today the building serves 1,800 clients a day in nine separate programs ranging from adult basic education to cable television technology and undergraduate college courses.

Agencies that rent space in the building pay fees to produce the $200,000 a year required to operate a facility that is "almost self-supporting," according to J. Thomas Webb, the principal.

Mr. Webb's role, though he is the senior principal in the Dayton school system and was principal of Roosevelt High, is to coordinate the activities of the building's tenants and try to achieve maximum use of the available space.

He said the assignment came as an "ego blow" but took on new importance because of the community's desire to maintain the building as an educational resource.

Roosevelt is the only high school closed by the city of Dayton so far. Due to a combination of aging facilities, declining enrollment and the need to comply with a 1976 court order to desegregate, the school system has shut down nine elementary schools.

It expects to close 10 more elementary schools at the end of this year because of declining enrollments and financial problems. Costs are rising, and Ohio taxpayers repeatedly have voted down referenda to increase taxes in support of education and other governmental services.

As in several other cities, the enrollment decline in the Dayton public schools is compounded by a mobile public that is also angry over school desegregation and busing. The population of Dayton, approximately 246,000, is becoming more residentially polarized, aggravating attempts to close schools and maintain integrated attendance zones in accordance with the court order.

"What we've wanted for many years |space| we've got now, and people are giving us hell for it," noted John B. Maxwell, Dayton's superintendent of schools.

He is not alone among superintendents in wondering whether surplus space is a blessing or a curse.

"We've closed schools with and without public hearings and we catch hell either way," the superintendent said. He conceded that the public displeasure was greater when there was no hearing.

H. H. Brannen, real estate officer for the Jacksonville, Fla., school system, summed up the problems faced in attempting to dispose of a surplus building:

"We are left with an old structure with a single-purpose design, an uninviting problem area and no one capable of taking over the structure having a need or even desiring it. . . .

"This is a game of no real-estate rules, but with a pyramid of government regulation. The odds are overwhelmingly against the school system."

Dayton has returned the bulk of its closed schools to educational use, the favored alternative of community groups.

Two vacated schools are being used as alternative schools for pupils who present disciplinary, emotional or achievement problems. Another is a combination nursing school and early childhood education center.

One facility was converted into a vocational education center for handicapped persons, and a fifth is being used as a combination school for pregnant girls and family-care training facility.

Ohio law requires that surplus schools be offered for sale at public auction, but finding a buyer and gaining community acceptance for the buyer's proposal has been difficult.

Late last year, citizen groups and the Dayton planning board opposed a plan by the Crowninshield Corporation, a development firm based in Peabody, Mass., to convert three abandoned school buildings to 150 apartments for low-income residents. School officials favored the propos-

al, which would have involved sale of the surplus buildings for $300,000.

The project was blocked by citizens who complained that they had not been consulted early enough in the negotiations and feared that so many subsidized apartments would harm the neighborhood. The planning board agreed that the inner-city community already had too many subsidized living units, and the buildings remain vacant.

Crowninshield had better luck in Baltimore, where it began negotiating last July for the right to convert six vacant school buildings to 133 subsidized apartments.

Last month, the project formally got under way as a joint venture between the city and Baltimore Schools Associates, which is made up of Crowninshield and the Jolly Company, Inc., local developers.

The city will pay $4.1 million to Baltimore School Associates to rehabilitate the buildings, which will technically remain city property. The project is scheduled for completion by August, 1980.

In Dayton, the sale of a school to the Texas-based Wings of Deliverance Church in March of 1978 was fought unsuccessfully in court by citizens who argued that the school board had failed to analyze fully the impact of the sale on the surrounding largely white community.

The $100,000 sale was upheld and the school, built in 1929 and closed in 1977, has been converted to a Christian day school and senior-citizen center.

Along with Dayton, Jacksonville, Fla., and Huntsville, Ala., have developed a wide range of alternative uses for surplus school buildings.

Jacksonville was ordered to close nine inner-city schools in 1971 after a court found that the city had maintained separate schools for black and white pupils. Huntsville's problems were caused by a mobile population and a city of rapidly changing economic character.

In each case, however, school officials had to move swiftly to develop new uses for old buildings before they became eyesores.

Jacksonville, under order not to upset a court-contrived racial-balance formula, has developed alternative uses for eight schools closed either by court order or by other factors.

But school closings based purely on enrollment decline have been avoided to prevent the "emotionalism" and divisiveness that would result, said Superintendent Herb A. Sang.

The school system received $46,000 for its general operating budget in each of the last two years from leases of unneeded school buildings for warehousing or religious purposes.

Four buildings have been demolished and the site of one is being considered as a location for a small shopping mall or sewage pumping station.

Educational programs, such as a career education center, halfway house for juvenile delinquents, special education center and exceptional child program, have been located in other buildings.

The school system is most proud of converting its old Mayport Elementary School, located in a beachfront community, to a marine science center for the city of Jacksonville and nearby counties. The center began operating with a federal grant but now is run by the school system.

It offers day-long marine science programs for elementary school pupils and provides high school level courses in marine biology, marine chemistry and physical oceanography during summer months.

School administration and tax assessment offices, a business library, a continuing education site and fire department training school have occupied all or parts of other buildings.

Huntsville is a small city which, like Jacksonville and Dayton, must address school closings within the confines of a desegregation order. Huntsville also shares Dayton's fiscal problems, but to a lesser degree.

Along with enrollment decline and a population that is becoming increasingly segregated, Huntsville is facing the possibility of a $3.5 million shortfall in its $35 million operating budget this year.

The need to economize is forcing the system to use surplus buildings to satisfy its own needs for increased space and is causing school administrators to give serious thought to adult education.

Residents of Alabama, like many citizens elsewhere who are given the choice, have refused to vote tax increases to meet rising government costs. In an era of declining enrollment when the majority of the population is not parents, Huntsville Superintendent D. Shelby Counce sees increased adult education as a means of widening the school system's constituency and possibly winning more favor at the polls.

Huntsville offers classes ranging from ballet to gourmet cooking and automobile mechanics in high schools at night and is considering expanding those offerings to daytime hours as space becomes available in the high schools.

Huntsville also uses one abandoned facility as an alternative school for pupils who are unruly in class. Another school was closed in the mid-1960's because of its age and condition but is now being used as a day care center, carpentry shop for the school board and community theater.

The University of Alabama at Huntsville is expanding in what once was an inner-city residential community. Schools there were closed because of the area's changing character, and one was bought by the university for use as an ambulatory care center. Two others are being used for special or early childhood education.

Three facilities have suffered serious enough enrollment declines to justify closing them, but Superintendent Counce has decided against it because of each facility's unique position.

Two are located in areas where serious community disruption could result if the children were suddenly moved into other Huntsville schools. One school serves what Mr. Counce called a "very community oriented" mountain society and another is located in what one school official said was an area "on the wrong side of the tracks."

The third school in which enrollment decline has reached serious proportions was built in the late 1960's in anticipation of residential growth. An industrial park was built nearby instead and now, vacant space within the building serves as the school system's media center.

Some Maryland school districts, facing many of the same pressures, are also in the business of recycling school buildings.

Prince Georges county has sold or transferred several surplus schools to city and town governments, including one that is being used as the Bowie City Hall. The school system uses several for regional offices.

Montgomery county has closed more than 20 buildings in the last six years and, in an effort to minimize future closings, has begun to rent surplus space within occupied school buildings.

Baltimore county is moving toward sharing space in the old Pikesville Elementary School building—abandoned in 1975—with community groups, the public library and the State Police. But the school system is not yet sharing surplus space with other agencies on a widespread basis.

The empty classrooms—III

Planning, Citizen Input Held Key To Handling Student-Enrollment Drop

When school systems respond to declining enrollments, the crucial parts of a solution appear to be planning and citizen participation—before the "emergency."

The furor in Baltimore county the past two years stemmed largely from the county's doing relatively limited planning in the public eye and involving citizens in a major way only after a crisis was at hand. At that point, many residents believed that basic decisions already had been made and they were being asked for ratification rather than recommendations.

A national study of the declining enrollment phenomenon reveals that the state of Minnesota and the city of Seattle have successfully managed both planning and citizen participation. In each case, citizens have a hand in deciding what will be done with a school building once it is closed.

But regardless of the means of soliciting public ideas, citizen groups faced with the loss of a desired school building almost always charge that data were too scarce, involvement too limited or the whole idea ill-conceived.

Minnesota's approach to dealing with the problem of enrollment decline grew out of a bill a state senator proposed in 1975 to consolidate the state's 436 school districts into slightly more than 100.

The measure was defeated but resulted in legislation the following year requiring all school districts to develop a five-year plan for dealing with what had become inevitable enrollment decline.

Enrollment in the state was 913,698 in 1971 and 869,613 in 1976. Population projections showed that, even with the increases expected in the early 1980's, the pupil population would not reach the 1970 level in the foreseeable future.

The state Department of Education provided technical assistance to each of the 14 planning regions created by the legislation but was instructed not to interfere in local decision-making. State officials are to receive the planning reports this summer but have not determined whether the state will enforce the plans or provide financial aid for implementation.

However, citizens groups are considering concepts that likely would have been opposed had they come from state or local school planners. Ideas under consideration involve interdistrict sharing of teachers and facilities, revised hiring and firing procedures and curriculum changes to provide administrators more flexibility as the number of students drops.

The reports are to include detailed projections of how falling enrollments will affect capital expenditures, tax rates and curriculum offerings through 1983.

In Maryland, Montgomery county has set aside one long-range plan and is working on another that will forecast building needs five years into the future.

Baltimore county school planners, arguing that accurate projections cannot be made so far in advance, have resisted preparing such a document, although the County Council has requested it repeatedly.

Critics of the county school system have cited Pine Grove Junior High School as an example of the need for better planning. The school, in the 9200 block Old Harford road, was opened in 1974 but by October, 1977, it was a candidate for closure because enrollment was 232 below projections.

County planners, however, say that the situation merely underscores the hazards and difficulties of attempting such long-range planning.

In Minneapolis, where 17 schools have been closed since 1975 and 15 others are likely to be declared surplus by 1984 due to declining enrollment and desegregation, detailed planning is under way.

Enrollments in Minneapolis dropped from 72,088 in 1963, the peak year, to 44,986 in October, 1978.

In May, 1976, a citywide committee studied school facilities and made long-range recommendations for their use, such as expansion of community outreach, vocational education and social programs.

Public hearings, announcement and evaluation criteria for closing a school also were developed, but by the time the plan was implemented, Minneapolis already had started to close schools.

Maryland school systems also have been devising mechanisms for citizen participation.

In Montgomery county, a cumbersome process was revised several years ago because it included so many hearings and committee meetings that effective decision making was stymied.

Baltimore county school officials developed a process that had the unexpected initial effect of pitting communities against one another.

Another effect was that the school board, lacking fiscal autonomy, found itself subject to the election-year whims of county and state politicians.

Citizen participation can be a means of decision-making, as was tried in Baltimore county; a way to cool community resentment, as is the case in Dayton, Ohio, or a forum providing community factions with constant briefings on the directions of the school board, although the public has no formal part in the decision-making process.

The city of Seattle, lacking any long-standing citizen participation process, has spent the last four years on studies designed to evaluate school closings from different perspectives.

Before 1975, there was little effective dialogue between the citizens of Seattle and the school administration. But that year, a tax levy failed and 1,500 teachers were laid off.

A group called "Seattle's Say on Schools" was then formed to provide public scrutiny of what some people believed to be a planning and budget process conducted in a vacuum.

The group examined the school board's budget and forced the setting of priorities that took declining enrollment into account. In addition, detailed cost and space needs analyses were completed for each school.

Seattle began a school desegregation plan in September, 1976, and schools involved in the busing that followed opened with enrollments 14 per cent lower than projected. The overall enrollment this year was 53,234, some 8 per cent less than the previous year and 1,994 fewer than projected.

The school administration began responding to the enrollment decline in 1965 by selling portable classroom units that had been erected in the high-growth years and closing older, small school buildings.

When conditions were crowded, "we never really were adequately housed," explained James Farris of the facilities staff. Consequently, Seattle has closed fewer schools than might be expected given the rate of decline.

Seattle's enrollments were 96,489 in 1962, but 85,000 in 1970 and 63,000 in 1976.

In 1976, using a grant from the National Institute for Education, Seattle conducted a schools and neighborhoods research study which examined the available data and the quality of the dialogue between the school administration and the citizens.

It noted a rise in the amount of citizen involvement but criticized school officials for reacting to projects initiated by city planners rather than co-operating with

them in early stages.

That study was followed by a metropolitan mobility study in 1977 to test the belief that people move because of concern about the quality of their schools and neighborhoods. It noted, among other trends, that dissatisfaction with the city school system was the reason most often given for moving to the suburbs.

Later that year, the Facilities Utilization Study was conducted which provided an analysis of classroom size, expansion capabilities and enrollments for each school.

It included a poll asking citizens, Parent-Teacher Association presidents and principals what alternative uses for surplus buildings were acceptable.

Sharing of vacant space with noneducational or religious groups was opposed by principals and P-TA presidents but both groups favored providing space to senior citizens.

The study also dealt with the fear that closing a school leads to community decline, but provided no data to support the point.

"Closing schools may create more problems that it solves," the report said.

This year, a committee of school board staff members and citizens is studying the idea of sharing school building space with educational, social or commercial interests, a process already being used to financial and public relations advantage in Montgomery county.

Last in a Series

APRIL 11, 1979

The empty classrooms—IV

In Game Of Fixed Costs You Win Some, Lose More

The school system of Livonia, Mich., a bedroom community of Detroit, provides a case study in what can go wrong when school enrollments decline faster than a community can respond.

In that city of 100,000 residents, elementary and secondary enrollments peaked in 1971 at 38,500 pupils. This year 26,113 are enrolled, and planners expect the number to drop by 10,000 more by 1984.

The drop has widened the division between teachers and administrators and between tenured and non-tenured teachers and is creating a climate in which the quality of education, normally thought high in suburban areas, could decline.

Livonia, like many other cities, is faced with the classic dilemma of rising costs and falling revenues. Fixed costs such as insurance, maintenance, energy consumption and salaries are related more to the overall size of the school system than whether 500 or 600 pupils occupy a given building.

Livonia is losing enrollment at an average rate of 5 per cent a year. Revenues from state and local sources are increasing by about 1 per cent a year while costs are rising at an annual rate of 5 per cent.

State aid to Michigan schools is based on school district wealth, computed on a formula that divides the district's tax base by the enrollment. As enrollment drops and property value rises—because of inflation and new construction—the district appears wealthier and qualifies for less state aid.

Michigan also provides direct payments to school districts to help offset the financial effects of declining enrollment, but in Livonia that program is no help at all.

For every Livonia pupil lost, the state pays $275 but withdraws $1,474 in regular compensation because of the school district's wealth, Dr. Garver explains.

While these problems are common—though in varying form—across the nation, school superintendents tend to be very deliberate in seeking solutions, often to the dismay of parents, teachers, taxpayers and politicians.

The deliberation is justified, says William F. Keough, Jr., former superintendent of the Bedford (Mass.) system.

"In growth, the passage of time tends to balance errors of judgment in resource allocation; in decline, time compounds them," he says.

George G. Garver, Livonia's superintendent, agrees. Faced with curriculum, personnel, budget and public relations problems, Dr. Garver notes that "whatever problems of growth there have been, they pale to insignificance when decline comes in."

In 1971, Livonia had 36 elementary schools, 10 junior highs and 4 senior highs. It now operates 28 elementary schools, 9 junior highs and 3 senior highs. Four elementary schools and two junior high schools are slated for closing in June.

Attrition is taking care of staff reductions, but is causing financial and morale problems. There has been almost no hiring at the elementary school level since 1970, Dr. Garver said, adding that more than three-fourths of the city's teachers "are at the top of the salary scale and nowhere near retiring."

Increasing numbers of higher-paid teachers cause Livonia's personnel budget to increase—and eliminate the "youngest, most vital, most enthusiastic and most recently trained teachers," Dr. Garver laments.

He fears that the age shift is likely to affect the quality of education in future years because "most educational change has been facilitated by growth."

The concern is shared by Keith B. Geiger, president of the Michigan Education Association, who says that a mixture of youth and age is needed to give a faculty the necessary enthusiasm and wisdom to be successful.

But senior educators say that Michigan's teachers are making it difficult for student teachers to get practice in state classrooms, at least partly because those students and their youthful enthusiasm are seen as a threat to the jobs of the experienced faculty members.

Last November, the teachers' union came close to adopting a resolution against working with student teachers. It stopped short of such a move, but it is working in many school districts in the state to limit the number of student teachers that can be hired.

Mr. Geiger says he and his membership make no apologies for defending themselves against the young teachers. Colleges were warned of the problems of teacher surplus several years ago, he said, adding that any student intending to teach English or social studies "is crazy to begin with" because of surpluses in those areas.

Michigan has 105,000 teachers, and layoffs are common but usually temporary. Of 6,000 teachers laid off in 1977, about 500 still are without jobs while the rest have been called back, though many are uncertain how long their positions will last.

Two Michigan school districts, Livonia and Southfield, pay bonuses for early retirement, making room for the supposedly more innovative and definitely lower-paid recent graduates.

In Livonia, a teacher who retires early and gives two years' notice receives a bonus of $100 for each year he has taught in the system. The total amount of the bonus is added to the teacher's salary for each of his last two years and thereby becomes a part of the earnings base on which his pension is computed.

In Southfield, a teacher who retires at age 55 receives a $5,000 bonus the first year and $500 less in each successive year

until he reaches age 62 and becomes eligible for Social Security benefits.

As economy measures, school districts try to minimize pay increases and replace the fewest number of teachers possible after each year's resignations and retirements. Beyond that, little can be done.

Last November, Dayton, Ohio, tried but failed to save money by not paying a supervisory differential to department heads. Teachers, just back from a September strike, refused to accept the positions without added pay, and those appointed to the posts resigned en masse.

Several states have grappled with the problem of state aid declining more rapidly than costs when enrollments fall.

Florida, Nevada and New York insure school districts against losses in state funds by guaranteeing an amount at least equal to that given the district the previous year.

Ohio, North Dakota and Colorado allow school systems to average enrollments over a three-year period for purposes of state aid, and several states, including California, Iowa, Minnesota and Washington, reduce aid by a percentage of enrollment decline but not on a direct per-pupil basis.

The trend toward fewer pupils and smaller staffs is aggravating a teacher surplus that has existed during the last 8 to 10 years, but some observers feel there is more imbalance than overabundance.

Large numbers of teachers seek English, social studies, or physical education positions and not enough plan careers teaching mathematics, foreign languages or business. Also, many seek jobs in urban districts or affluent suburbs while rural jobs go begging.

A study conducted by the National Education Association in 1972 suggested that school boards solve the surplus problem by hiring more teachers and using the added instructors and fewer students to create smaller classes.

Increased staffing, along with teachers receiving more time away from the classroom for professional enrichment, would improve the quality of education, the report reasoned.

However, the pressures of declining enrollment, inflation and taxpayer sentiment to hold down spending have worsened the teacher job squeeze.

Michigan's teachers are trying to develop inter-district arrangements for sharing staff members or for giving a teacher laid off in one district priority over new persons applying for positions in others.

Last year, Baltimore county became one of the few, if not the only, large school district in the country with a unionized teaching force to tie job security to teaching proficiency.

Over the objections of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County, the school board developed a plan under which tenured teachers rated "satisfactory" on two of their last three annual evaluations would be exempted from being laid off.

Teacher organizations typically say that proficiency is too subjective to become a basis of job-security decisions, and claim that whatever evaluation process is in place should be used to improve the entire teacher corps so that layoffs, when necessary, can be based on length of service alone.

School administrators admittedly are ill-equipped to come up with solutions to problems such as these because:

- Their training and experience have been in responding to growth.
- The problems of enrollment decline are not easily explained to the public.
- The cost of education is rising as public confidence in its methods is falling.
- No national information has been generated to determine the best method of dealing with enrollment decline.
- School planners, many of whom were late in seeing the decline coming, now have trouble convincing a skeptical, and even angry, public that their projections of continued decline are valid.

In almost all cases, and Maryland has been no exception, the first school closings are the most difficult for school board and administrators to justify publicly.

The recurring problem comes down to one of setting priorities.

The more a community's fiscal, social, educational and political priorities are understood and incorporated into the process of deciding which schools to close, educators and political leaders say, the more readily a decision can be reached—and accepted.

South Mississippi Sun

Biloxi-Gulfport-Ocean Springs-Pascagoula

JANUARY 28, 1979

First in a Series

South pays its price for stinginess in education

LINDA WILLIAMS

During five years of education reporting Linda Williams covered the schools in a number of Southern districts. Her work for the *South Mississippi Sun* received the Mississippi Press Association award for excellence in education writing.

Years of exposure to schools that trailed the national average in per pupil spending prompted Ms. Williams to undertake a Fellowship study of "School Finance Patterns in the South." In meetings with finance experts, legislators and educators throughout the South, she delt with such issues as relative proportions of state, local and federal funds, efforts to equalize or increase school funding, the impact of sunbelt growth patterns on the schools, and the effects of finance patterns on desegregation.

In addition to this comprehensive series on school finance in the South, Ms. Williams findings appear in her Fellowship report and in "Just Schools," *Southern Exposure* Magazine's commerative edition of the 25th anniversary of the *Brown* Supreme Court decision.

School reforms gain strength

By LINDA WILLIAMS
SUN STAFF WRITER

School children and teachers in the Maxton, N.C. school district are demoralized by low test scores. The superintendent has other worries: The old school buildings are in bad shape and there's no money to replace them. The district can't afford to supplement the state salaries of its teachers and can't compete with a district just six miles down the road that can afford higher salaries. In the surrounding Robeson County school district, the superintendent is delighted to have been able to "squeeze" money from the district's tight budgets over the past two years to hire part-time school librarians.

A South Carolina school superintendent attempts to repair school buildings with his own hands because there is no money for repairs in the district's coffers.

A Florida parent complains about the $8 she has to provide each year for her daughters' school supplies. The teachers at the school tell her that they buy supplies with money out of their own pockets for other children whose parents can't afford to.

In Noxubee County, Miss., public school teachers complain that they wait all year for requisitioned equipment and supplies that never arrive.

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MONEY FOR SCHOOLS

Mississippi and the South

These people live daily with the inadequacies of school finance systems in the South — systems that critics say suffer the double burden of inadequate resources and unfair and inefficient distribution of those resources.

The problems in financing public education in America are receiving increasing attention and today a reform movement is gaining strength. Among the reasons for this interest are resistance to higher property taxes — the major source of school funds in the nation — and recent lawsuits.

The best-known lawsuits challenged state school finance systems that were heavily dependent upon local property taxes. A major victory for school finance reformers was the Serrano vs. Priest case in which the California Supreme Court ruled that a child's education should not be tied to the wealth of his community. The 1971 decision said the state school finance system violated the 14th Amendment and a similar equal protection clause of the California state constitution. The case was sent back to a lower court for a trial on the facts.

School finance reformers were disappointed when the U. S. Supreme Court in 1973 overturned a similar federal district court decision in the Rodriguez case from Texas.

The reform trend is toward making the amount of money spent on schools relative to the wealth of the state as a whole rather than the wealth of individual school districts.

and toward more state funding and less dependency on local property taxes.

Some Southern states have responded to school finance problems with some progressive reform measures in the 1970's. A set of proposals to overhaul Mississippi's 25-year-old system is awaiting legislative action. Other states have some promising prospects on the drawing boards, although there's little activity in Mississippi's adjacent states beyond the study stage. Tennessee, however, did make a major change in 1977 to equalize the distribution of state money, but the legislature did not increase overall state funding so that the change would have an effect on total school spending in the state.

Many of the South's school finance problems are common to the rest of the nation. But there's one major difference — the South has always spent less money on education than other regions of the nation and continues to do so, although there has been much progress in that area in recent years. School expenditures in the South are increasing at a faster rate than the national average. According to a National Education Association report, expenditures in the South increased 38 percent above the national average between 1963 and 1973.

But the fact that the South is still behind in spending reflects how far the region still has to go. In order to put the South's school finance problems in perspective, it's necessary to look back a bit.

Free public schools began spreading in America early in the 19th century. But there were no public schools in the South until after the Civil War, after it appeared that Northern philanthropy would provide free schooling for emancipated blacks.

For the South, it has been a game of catch up every since.

Progress was very slow for white schoolchildren. It was even slower for blacks who depended heavily on private resources in those early years. Well into the 20th century, there were separate and unequal schools and budgets for black and white schools. Today, there is a concern in some quarters that black children — and in Texas, Mexican-American children — still suffer most from the inequities in Southern state school finance systems.

Most post-Civil War Southern state constitutions required the states to provide for public schools. Mississippi and Alabama do not now have constitutional mandates to the states to provide free schooling for their children.

A 1960 Mississippi constitutional amendment replaced the 1890 constitutional requirement for the state to provide free public schools. The new amendment says "the legislature may, in its discretion, provide for the maintenance of free public schools" and it was part of the state leadership's efforts to thwart the Supreme Court's 1954 decision outlawing school segregation. Alabama's constitution was similarily amended in 1956.

Constitutional or other policy commitments to education in the South notwithstanding, the low level of spending has created considerable doubt as to the depth of those commitments.

Some Southern leaders defend low expenditures for education by citing differences in the cost of living and the region's poverty. Deflate the figures for differences in the cost of living and the South is still behind, says educational consultant Jack Leppert. Leppert and consultant Dorothy Routh compared school spending in relation to wealth for a U. S. Office of Education report on the economic and educational well being of the South. They found that the South spends a smaller proportion of personal income on education than the national average.

The price the South pays for its stinginess, they argue, is continued low achievement among its students. The results of the 1974 National Assessment of Educational Progress showed Southern 17-year-olds achieving below the national average in all areas tested.

Current school finance reform efforts in the South are focusing on ways to increase financial resources as well as to fairly redistribute them.

Some new distribution formulas have been developed. Work continues on other technical problems in redesigning school finance systems. But there are other problems. For better or worse, education is inextricably tied to politics.

"You could design a [school finance] system that's absolutely equal and fair, but you couldn't get it through the legislature," says Dr. Carey Ferrell, director of the division of public schools in the Florida Department of Education.

"If you're talking about redistributing the money, you're talking about taking something away from somebody," adds a Tennessee educator. Most likely, he said, the districts that would lose state funds would be the wealthier urban districts whose representatives are a power to be reckoned with in the legislature.

Another political problem to be reckoned with are pressures on lawmakers to reduce spending. The reaction of politicians all over the nation to date does not indicate that they consider education budgets to be sacred.

JANUARY 28, 1979

Sources of school funds

Since the early 1950s, the South has funded a greater share of school costs from state treasuries than have other regions of the nation.

Although state and local sources provide the lion's share of school funding, the South is more dependent on federal funds than are other regions of the nation. In some Southern states the federal share of total school funding is two to three times the national average of 8 percent.

Impact aid — money paid to school districts with federal property or children of federal employees — is a factor in the higher federal funding because many of the nation's military bases are in the South. Also, federal funding formulas for such programs as ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), which are based on poverty levels, favor the South.

The differences in high and low spending among various school districts within states in the South are not as great as in some other areas — except in Texas — because of low overall spending for education and higher shares of state and federal money. But the intrastate differences in spending for schools are significant.

Financing schools was strictly a local problem until the early 20th century when states began giving flat grants — a number of dollars for each child or each teacher — to schools. Federal money was not a factor until after World War I when the government began funding vocational education programs.

So-called equalizing grants, the forerunners of today's Minimum Foundation Plan (MFP), were next adopted by states and are still common in the South. Alabama in 1935 was one of the first states to adopt a MFP. The principles of the MFP were developed in 1922.

The basic elements of the formula were these:

•each school district must tax at a certain rate.

•each district is entitled to a certain amount of money for every student.

•if the local tax does not raise the amount needed per pupil, the state makes up the difference.

States which adopted MFPs — including Mississippi — allowed extra local spending to whatever degree the school district could afford above their required tax rate. This "local leeway" is the basis for the inequities in the plan, since property wealth varies from school district to school district.

Also, local school districts learned early that they could tax at the required rate and still get more state money by assessing property at a low percentage of actual value. The results were a hodgepodge of different assessment practices within states.

States have experimented with a number of schemes to overcome these problems. Mississippi, for example, has an economic index to measure property and non-property wealth to determine what local districts must contribute to the MFP.

Over the years, minimum foundation plans in the South have been amended so much that they are difficult to understand and administer.

Second in a Series

JANUARY 29, 1979

Lawsuits over school financing are surfacing across the country

There are 13 school districts within the San Antonio, Texas metropolitan area. Many of them are distinguishable from each other by ethnic and income differences.

In 1971, parents of children in the poor, predominantly Mexican-American Edgewood district filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging unconstitutional discrimination in the state's school finance system. Although the final outcome of the suit was not what the parents had hoped, Rodriguez vs. San Antonio Independent School District sufficiently rattled the state's leadership to bring about serious consideration of reforms. Rodriguez was the first important school finance suit to be accepted by the U.S. Supreme Court for review, and it received nationwide attention.

Grievances about the way schools are financed in America began spilling over into the courts about a decade ago. But such lawsuits didn't get very far until the year of the Rodriguez suit, when the California Supreme Court also issued a preliminary ruling in a similar case.

The court ruled, in Serrano vs. Priest, that the state's school finance system violated the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution and a similar provision of the state constitution. California did not appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the case is pending on an order from the state high court for a trial on the facts.

A number of school finance suits are pending in state and federal courts in Louisiana, Arkansas, Georgia and Texas. No such suit has been filed yet in Mississippi. The lawsuits challenge all or part of the states' school finance system.

Numerous other school finance cases are pending in other regions. The complexities of an important case in New York state prompted one of the attorneys to remark that watching the case unfold was like "watching grass grow."

Like Texas, the California school finance system depended heavily upon local property taxes, and expenditures for schools varied greatly because they depended on the wealth of individual school districts. The court ruling in Serrano said that rich school districts "could have their cake and eat it too; for they can provide a high-quality education for their children while paying lower taxes. Poor districts by contrast have no cake at all."

> The unequal tax burden and great disparities in school spending also were complaints against Texas school finance system in the Rodriguez case.
>
> Texas didn't dispute that there were great disparities in school spending within the state. Its defense was that it was providing an adequate minimum education for all children, and that it believed local choices in determining how much local spending there would be was an important practice to continue.
>
> A three-judge district court panel ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, but the state appealed. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court in a 5-4 ruling.
>
> The majority of justices said, essentially, that the Texas system was unfair and the state should reform it — but the system was not unconstitutional. The ruling said education — although an important social service — is not a "fundamental interest" because it is not explicitly or implicitly declared to be so in the Constitution. The majority also found that the state was not deliberately

classifying citizens for different treatment.

Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., who sided with the majority, said: "The consideration and initiation of fundamental reforms with respect to state taxation and education are matters reserved for the legislative processes of the various states."

Children's chance lost?

In dissent, Justice Thurgood Marshall said: "The majority's holding can only be seen as a retreat from our historic commitment to equality of educational opportunity and as unsupportable acquiescence in a system which deprives children in their earliest years of the chance to reach their potential as citizens."

Texas attempted to reform its school finance system in 1975 and 1977. Since then, local school districts have again taken the state to court over the formula used to determine how much each local district contributes to the state minimum program. The suit charges that the exclusion of intangible property (bank accounts, stocks, etc.) from the formula discriminated against certain school districts. The plaintiffs allege that the action is unconstitutional because intangible property is taxable under Texas law. Since the lawsuit, a constitutional amendment has been approved allowing the Legislature to remove intangible property from the tax structure.

Local school districts express a similar grievance against the Louisiana system in a state court lawsuit. An appeal of a lower court ruling in favor of the state is pending. The state at one time determined state aid to local school districts by first determining how much each district would need each year and subtracting the proceeds from a mandatory 5-mill property tax for schools from that cost. In 1976, the state in effect equalized assessments, based on a property tax ratio study, to determine the amount of state aid rather than the proceeds from the tax levy.

Plaintiffs challenge study

The plaintiffs, which include the Orleans, Jefferson and Caddo Parish school boards, say the tax ratio study was defective and the formula for distributing state funds is now necessarily "arbitrary and capricious."

School districts in Arkansas charged in a state court suit in 1977 that funds from the the state's minimum foundation program were unconstitutionally distributed. The suit alleges that a "hold harmless" clause (guaranteeing local districts the same amount of money they received under an older plan) perpetuates the inequities that existed in the distribution of state funds prior to the implimentation of the foundation program in 1951.

In Georgia, local school districts attacked the state's school finance plan in court and the state Legislature attempted to respond to their grievances in 1974 by approving a new plan. But plaintiffs contended that the new plan was also inadequate and simply amended their suit.

Third in a Series

JANUARY 30, 1979

Equal assessments may bring reforms to school finances

School finance reformers in Mississippi could benefit from a recent Hinds County Chancery Court order to the State Tax Commission to equalize property assessments within the state, if and when the order is carried out.

The school finance reform package proposed for Mississippi hinges on successful property assessment equalization, Dr. Jerry Hutchinson, staff director of the Committee for Equalizing Public School Finance, said. The committee, appointed by the governor and the state superintendent of education and funded by a federal grant, has conducted a study of school financing in the state.

The track record for school finance reform in the South shows that the states that have been most successful in recent years first moved to clean up their property tax systems. In Mississippi, the court ruling on assessment, favored by the coalition of business, labor and education groups that filed the lawsuit last year, is a mandate for state authorities to move on reform.

The result of the finance committee's study are proposals to completely overhaul the school finance system in Mississippi, a system that has not changed significantly since the minimum foundation program — the basic state school fund — was approved in 1953. Among its recommendations are increasing the local property tax contribution to the minimum program fund and changing the formula for determining how much of that local share each school district would be responsible for generating. Currently, local money for the foundation program is fixed at $16 million of the total annual fund.

The committee looked at a variety of school finance problems in Mississippi and has concluded that the state needs a new method for distributing minimum program funds.

Even so, the major school finance problem in Mississippi, said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Charles Holladay, is a scarcity of funds. Mississippi is the poorest state in the nation with the lowest amount of state and local revenue spent on schools, according to reports of the National Center for Educational Statistics.

"In reality [the problem] is a lack of money to do the job," Holladay said. "The [state] leadership has never focused on education so that it will be the No. 1 concern." The educational achievement of the state's school children will not improve until attention is given to school finance problems, he added. Noting the state's concern with

attracting industry, he said that industry would be more willing to locate in the state if the schools were better.

Mississippi schools depend on an unusually high percentage of federal money — 23.4 percent, according to 1977-78 expenditure receipts. State money accounted for 52.9 percent and local money was about 23 percent.

Average per pupil expenditures in 77-78 ranged from $710 a year in the Pearl school district to $1,661 in Yazoo County. The differences in per pupil expenditures has been cited as a reason for reform. But it's necessary to examine the sources of a school district's funds in order to help determine what the differences in per pupil expenditures actually means in terms of the quality of education in different districts.

The source of the funds often determines what the school district can do with them. Average daily attendance (ADA) is the basis for the distribution of the state minimum foundation money.

A portion of the foundation money is earmarked for teachers' salaries. Biloxi, for example, is entitled to 292 state paid teachers because of its ADA. However, the school district has 415 teachers; some of the teachers not paid under the minimum program are paid with federal funds, while most are locally paid.

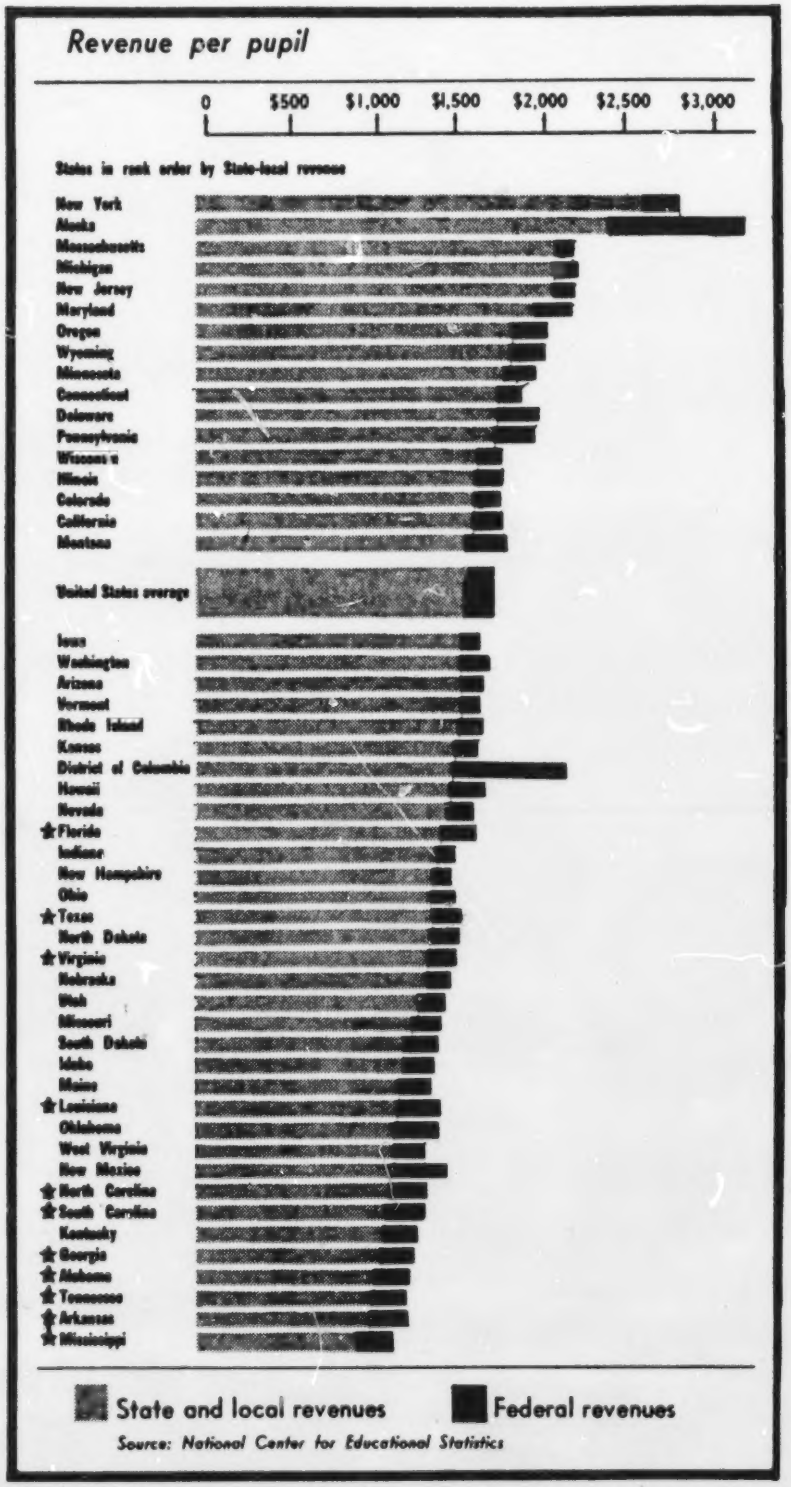
School districts are allowed some money under the foundation program for supplies based on the number of state paid teachers they have. However, the minimum program doesn't provide money for other services such as librarians and school counselors.

There are other categories for state funding, such as transportation, outside the minimum program. The Education Finance Commission, which assists local school districts with building projects, is an independent agency outside the state department of education.

Ironically, according to sources familar with the history of education in Mississippi, the EFC is also a creature of the "stop Brown" period. The agency was created in the 50s, they say, to improve black schools as a defense against integration ordered by the Supreme Court in the Brown decision of 1954.

Except for impact aid money, federal money can only be used for a specific purpose. Yazoo County got 53 percent of its money from federal sources. Its high per pupil expenditure doesn't necessarily mean that the district is in better shape than districts on the Gulf Coast, which have much lower per pupil expenditures. Since so much of Yazoo's money comes from federal sources, a high percentage of its funds is probably spent on such needs as free school lunches and remedial programs for poor, low-achieving students. The federal funds do not help the school district with such things as new buildings, salary supplements for teachers, librarians, and counselors — things that are paid for with a higher percentage of local money on the Coast.

On the Coast, expenditures ranged



Expenditures and salaries on the Coast

City	Average expenditures per student in ADA	Average teachers' salaries	Average daily attendance for 1977-78
Pascagoula	$1,289	$11,066	8,331
Pass Christian	$1,284	$10,723	1,358
Biloxi	$1,212	$11,089	6,728
Gulfport	$1,153	$10,905	6,465
Long Beach	$1,019	$10,656	3,375
Bay St. Louis	$1,011	$10,457	1,891
Hancock County	$1,004	$10,056	1,748
Harrison County	$979	$10,329	9,304
Moss Point	$949	$10,442	6,339
Jackson County	$934	$9,985	6,134
Ocean Springs	$932	$10,683	4,099
State average	$1,085*	$10,432*	

Source: Mississippi State Department of Education.
*State department figures are actual expenditures for 1977-78. National Education Association figures are estimates for the same year.

from a low of $932 per student in the Ocean Springs school district to a high of $1,289 per student in the Pascagoula district. All of Jackson County's school districts, except Pascagoula, are near the bottom in per pupil expenditures among state school districts. Federal funds in the county are not that much of a factor (6 to 8 percent), but Pascagoula gets a much higher percentage of its funds from local sources than the others, giving the district a lot of freedom in determining how its money is used.

The amount of local money spent on schools in the state is linked to assessment practices as well as the amount of property wealth.

Hardly anyone disagrees that there are disparities in taxing of property among and within the state's 82 counties. There is also no mandatory periodic reappraisal law in the state, which has had the effect of keeping property assessments low. Low assessments were cited in the study committee report as one reason local money for schools has not kept pace with state money. Many school districts have reached their legal millage limits (25) and have no other tax device with which to increase income.

Equalized assessment practices is necessary if the state is to efficiently manage a state school finance system where there is a state/local sharing of cost, the school finance study committee said in its report.

And as long as the local property tax is the base for local support of education, the report said, "... there is no logical, effective, and reasonable way to equalize the tax burden on individual property owners in a district or among property owners of different districts than to equalize assessment of property in relation to its true market value among property owners throughout the state."

Regional expenditures and salaries

State	Average expenditures per student in ADA	Average teachers' salaries
Louisiana	$1,673	$13,935
Virginia	$1,603	$12,850
Florida	$1,577	$11,243
Texas	$1,352	$12,820
South Carolina	$1,350	$11,312
North Carolina	$1,343	$12,943
Tennessee	$1,336	$11,943
Georgia	$1,290	$12,170
Alabama	$1,281	$11,797
Arkansas	$1,270	$10,026
Mississippi	**$1,220**	**$10,500**
Regional average	$1,390	$11,958
National average	$1,742	$14,244

Source: National Education Association estimates for 1977-78.

The committee is proposing that the local share of the minimum program be established at 30 percent of the program's total amount. The local share of the program was fixed at $16 million in 1968, which is now "insignificant," said Hutchinson. Takin into account cost increaes since 1968, that $16 million is now only about 5 percent of the program's total amount, he said.

The committee also asserts that the current economic index used to determine how much each school district contributes to the program is inadequate. The index includes six weighted variables of wealth such as each county's percentage of state sales taxes, percentage of motor vehicle taxes and farm products sold. The committee report said the index is accurate only for determining how much of the $16 million each county is to contribute. In instances where there is more than one school district within the county, each school district's share of the county's total assessed valuation is the measure used to determine how much of the county's share each school district is responsible for toward raising the $16 million. This is inadequate, the committee concluded, because assessment practices often vary within counties.

Other recommendations in the committee's report include:

•A requirement that the state develop guidelines for the classification of students in weighted programs and that the State Department of Audit monitor school districts for compliance.

•The reorganization of school districts so there will be one type of school district and one set of school laws. Presently, there are four types of school districts — county, consolidated, municipal and and special municipal — covered by different laws. For example, municipal school boards are fiscally independent in that they can approve a budget requiring up to a 25-mill tax levy and the city council must approve it. County boards of supervisors may approve the budgets submitted by county school boards.

The Mississippi legislature will not consider the school finance proposals this year, Rep. Robert Clark, chairman of the House Education Committee, said. The state department wants more time to get support for the recommended changes.

To date, the only "school reform" measure to be approved was the 1978 legislation designed to reform the management of 16th Section lands set aside to raise money for schools. The bill transfers management of 16th Section leases to school boards from county supervisors, although the supervisors still have veto power over leases. The bill also requires that rents be based on "fair market values" and it limits the length of certain leases.

Fourth in a Series

JANUARY 31, 1979

Florida finance plan equalizes expenses for state education

The 1973 Florida school finance plan has been cited as a model of how a state can equalize expenditures for education within its borders. Its critics contend, though, that it is also a model showing that equalization alone, without sufficient state funds, is not enough.

"The state aid program is equalized, but financially inadequate," Dr. Kern Alexander, professor of education administration and director of the Institute for Educational Finance at the University of Florida, said during a 1977 congressional hearing on school finance.

When the Florida legislature approved the Florida Education Finance Program (FEEP) in 1973, it decided that each school district would be required to levy a certain number of mills, currently 6.4. The proceeds from those mills and other state money would make up the basic state aid program, under which funds would be distributed equally throughout the state.

In 1975, Florida joined a few other states that require limited local school spending as a condition for participation in the state equalization program. The legislature said local districts could levy no more than 1.6 extra mills for schools without a referendum. The cap on local spending helps to equalize about 80 percent of the per-pupil expenditures throughout the state and, not incidentally, provides some protection for local taxpayers.

"Conceivably," Alexander explained; "a state could fully equalize among school districts meeting the 'expenditure test,' but not fully provide sufficient funds to give any of the children an adequate education, much less a quality one. This has been the experience of Florida during the past few years when the legislature capped off local property tax levies at eight mills, raised the required local effort to about 6.3 mills, then failed to provide sufficient state aid to offset the loss of local revenue."

The state constitution allows school boards to levy up to 10 mills without a vote of the people, but no one has tested the constitutionality of the 1975 legislative amendment to the FEEP.

The FEEP replaced Florida's minimum program implemented in 1947. It's the most comprehensive school finance reform effort in the South and has been cited as among the most progressive in the nation.

The program is designed to accomplish a number of goals, including:

- equalization of expenditures among the state's 67 school districts.
- equalization of the abilities of different school districts to raise local money.
- channeling most of the state money to the poorest school districts.
- fair distribution of money to Florida students with different needs.
- adequate consideration to the

differences in costs diverse school districts must bear.

The FEEP grew out of an intensive school finance study sponsored by Gov. Rubin Askew. It was designed to bring Florida in line with what school finance experts call the "fiscal neutrality" standard which grew out of the Serrano lawsuit in California. Serrano challenged a school finance system which made educational spending dependent upon the wealth of individual school systems within the state.

"What we strive for is to provide equal access to education regardless of geography, regardless of need or the economic conditions of the county in which a child lives," said Will D. Connolly, associate education commissioner for fiscal policy analysis.

Florida has some advantages, existing prior to 1973, not shared by Mississippi and many Southern states. There are a small number of school districts organized along county lines with fairly uniform property assessments and taxes.

Thus, the required 6.4-mill tax levy is, theoretically, a credible representation of equal effort among the school districts. The state requires that property be assessed at 100 percent of value and requires property reappraisals every three years.

Another equalizing tactic Florida has had limited success with is the pupil weight system used as a means of distributing funds to schools. Florida was a leader in the South in adopting the plan. Pupil weights are a useful tool for distributing money fairly to children with different educational needs, Florida officials said, but cautioned that the system is subject to political manipulation like any other funding scheme.

The first cost figures used to develop the pupil weights in Florida were probably not accurate, said Dr. Carey Ferrell, director of the Department of Education's division of public schools.

"There was no evidence to indicate what was an appropriate weight ... no data available from around the country," Ferrell said, "so, the original weights established in 1973 were very arbitrary." The Legislature also used those weights to implement priorities, Ferrell added, explaining that the legislature increased the weight for kindergarden through third grade because it wanted to emphasize early childhood education.

"The first time we had very little time to develop cost figures," said Woodrow Darden, executive director of the Florida Association of School Administrators and former director of the state department's public schools division. "When we got them [the legislature] ignored them because the figures redistributed the money, which they didn't want to do politically."

Darden said the weights have required constant refinement. An unresolved question, he added, is whether the weights should be based on what is already being spent on a category of students or what should be spent. "I don't think we're sophisticated enough to base them on what should be spent."

The suggested weights for Mississippi students are based on what's already being spent in representative school districts.

An important feature of the Florida plan is that it requires better reporting and accountability of expenditures. School boards must keep information on costs on a school-by-school basis and make public all information on costs and student achievement.

Florida also has a controversial cost differential index in its finance plan that is designed to give districts in more expensive parts of the state more money. Cities mainly benefit. Some school districts challenged the cost differential in court and won a consent decree for the state to change some of the factors used in determing the index.

Officials of other states considering school finance reform have expressed some skepticism about the differential. Such a differential is suspect when it's based on the cost of living in different areas because some of the things schools have to buy are constant, said John Augenblick, a researcher at the Education Commission of the States' school finance project.

North Carolina school districts suffer from lack of local money, federal grants

School financing a nationwide problem

It doesn't take much probing in rural Robeson County, N. C. to find grievances against the state's school finance system. School buildings are old and falling apart, teachers' salaries are low, and money for support personnel such as full-time librarians is scarce.

There are many differences in the way North Carolina and Mississippi fund schools, but many of the issues raised by people seeking changes in both states are similar. For example, in both states, officials of poor school districts say the state and federal funds they get — while they may increase total resources — doesn't give them the freedom that richer districts have with their greater amounts of local money, for which the districts themselves determine the spending criteria.

Reform proposals for Mississippi and North Carolina indicate that both states may move in the same direction. North Carolina's proposals include the adoption of the pupil weight system to distribute funds to students, thus equalizing efforts of local communities to contribute to schools, and a state fund to equalize the per-pupil expenditures among school districts.

Unlike Mississippi, North Carolina does not have a minimum foundation program, but there is a basic state aid fund that provides the bulk of the money spent on schooling within the

state. North Carolina has what is essentially a flat grant system with the bulk of the grants in teachers' salaries. There are 63 categories for state aid, all with independent criteria for disbursement.

A major concern of the Governor's Commission on Public School Finance, said North Carolina State Sen. Ed Renfrow, was to stop the proliferation of categorical grants in the finance system. "We [the legislature] get hit every year from special interest groups in education to add another line item. . . [The Commission] has tried to address the child's needs rather than the art teacher's or the P.E. teacher's."

Small school districts often do not have enough students to qualify for many categorical grants, said Douglas Younge, superintendent of the Maxton school district in Robeson County. "Our music and P.E. money combined comes to about $6,000 a year. I can't get a full-time teacher for that."

Critics of the state plan also say that the state contributes to inequities among rich and poor school districts by giving more money to school districts that can afford attractive supplemental salaries for better-educated and more experienced teachers. That criticism also applies to the Mississippi minimum program. Both states guarantee minimum salaries for teachers, with a state salary schedule based on training and experience.

But the school districts that can afford to offer the best salary supplements to attract better-trained and more experienced teachers get more state money. The Maxton school district cannot afford to supplement the state salaries of its teachers and cannot compete with school districts across the county line that can.

A critical school finance issue is brewing in Robeson County, similar to one that was also addressed in the Mississippi study committee's report. "Mississippi has too many school districts," the report said, "too many attendance centers within certain districts . . . " Recently, the school district consolidation issue has surfaced on the Coast in Hancock and Jackson counties.

Consolidations in North Carolina have not saved money, said Robeson County superintendent Pernell Sweat, "but the monies we receive that go into support of the administrative mechanisms would be redirected into student support."

The North Carolina State Department of Education has actively promoted consolidations for counties like Robeson because the school districts are small and because, under state law, county boards of commissioners (supervisors) control local school funds for all school districts within their counties.

And in Robeson County, six school districts must compete with other social services for county funds because of the county's poverty.

Robeson County has wrestled with the consolidation issue for years, Sweat said, adding that it is a tough political problem aggravated by the three-way racial (black, white and Indian) divisions in the county. Some of the school districts have more minority (black and Indian) schoolchildren, he said, and there is fear on the part of some whites that merger would mean more integration. Also, he said, both the whites, who control the city school systems, and the Lumbee Indians, who control the county system, are apprehensive about who would control the merged school district.

Fifth in a Series

FEBRUARY 1, 1979

South Carolina's economic growth aids school reform

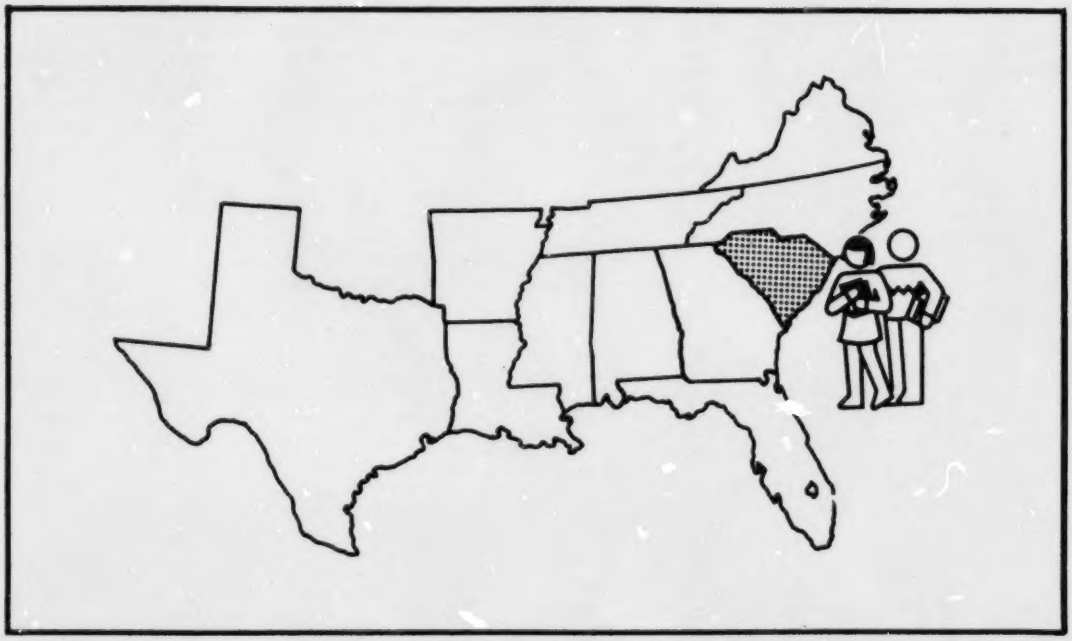
South Carolina has been described as a poor state that's coming into better times.

A politically astute coalition of citizens — held together by the state's League of Women Voters — capitalized on South Carolina's growing prosperity to win approval of a school finance reform bill in 1977.

State revenue is growing rapidly, thanks to South Carolina's success in wooing industries such as Michelin Tire Co., which built a giantic plant at Spartanburg, doubling the tax base of the local school district practically overnight and generating additional state taxes.

The school finance bill assures that education gets "its share" of new money coming into the state, said Roger Kirk, education assistant to Gov. James B. Edwards, during the reform campaign.

The bill commits the state to adding at least $100 million to schools over a five-year period and creates a new distribution system for state money. Prior to 1977, state school aid was a flat grant system, with most of the grants for teachers' salaries. Critics said that state money distributed in such a manner did nothing to make up for inequities in school spending created by differences in property wealth among the school districts. They noted that people in poor school districts were paying higher taxes, but reaping fewer educational bene-



fits than those in richer districts who frequently paid fewer taxes.

The 1977 plan created a new state education fund, with the state and local school systems sharing the costs. When the plan is fully implemented at the end of a five-year period, the state will be responsible for 70 percent of the funding and the local districts for 30 percent.

South Carolina also preceded its school finance reform bill with a constitutional amendment designed to equalize local property tax assessments. When the amendment is fully implemented, assessed valuation will be the basis for determining each school district's ability to contribute to the state fund. For now, the state is using an economic index that includes indicators of wealth other than property values.

Unlike Florida, South Carolina did not attempt to limit what local school districts may spend in addition to what they are required to contribute to the state plan.

South Carolina also adopted the pupil weight system as a means of distributing state money to schools, but has since been criticized for weights that have no relationship to the actual cost of educating the students. Revision of the weights has little effect, the critics contend, because state law limits increases in appropriations for each category of students to 2 percent a year, even if a revision indicates that more money is needed.

When the coalition was organized in 1973, statistics indicated that education in the state was not in the best of shape. Only about 50 percent of the state's youth completed high school. Only about 10 percent of those graduates continued their education. The state's young men had a 20 percent failure rate on the armed forces literacy test — a rate more than three times the national average.

The coalition appealed to the state's pride to do something to improve those dismal statistics, said Joy Sovde of Columbia, president of the state League of Women Voters.

A unique aspect of school finance reform in South Carolina, said coalition member Hayes Mizell, was the manner in which it was accomplished — "not initiated through the courts or the Legislature."

Mizell is the director of the American Friends Service Committee's Southeastern Education Project in Columbia. His group, the league and the South Carolina Education Association all published studies on pre-1973 school finance in the state and together called a statewide conference that led to the formation of the coalition.

The key to the coalition's success was that it covered all the political bases. The initiators got groups as diverse as the NAACP and the Farm Bureau Federation to lend their names to the effort. Their efforts gained extra credibility when they got Kirk to persuade his Republican boss to appoint a governor's commission on school finance.

Thus with diverse support, the coalition stayed together by focusing on the general idea to improve the system, Mizell said. The goals deliberately were kept "rather vague" so as not to force people to take positions on specifics too soon, which could have been divisive, he added.

The coalition made school finance reform an issue in the 1976 state legislative campaigns and sought popular support with school finance education programs.

As the final proposal moved through the Legislature, among the opposition were legislators from districts with strong private, segregated schools. The league views the South Carolina reform as a special victory

for public education because the strong influence of the private schools faction was overcome.

South Carolina's experience with school desegregation was similar to Mississippi's in that a high percentage of blacks in many communities in both states led to greater white flight from public schools.

Race was a factor in many of the financing discrepancies of schools in South Carolina, according to a report completed by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The committee's report, showing a statewide pattern of what it concluded was "deliberate" underfunding of school systems that had gained a majority of black students after integration, was completed in the middle of the school finance campaign.

But the school finance coalition persuaded the Lawyers' Committee to withhold publication of the report in order to give the Legislature time to act. The coalition did not want school finance to become a racial issue, said Terry Peterson, SCEA researcher. "We knew that if it became a racial issue, we were dead."

The report was released after the bill was approved with a warning to the Legislature to carry out the commitments it made in the bill.

Indeed, the job ahead for the coalition, said Ms. Sovde, is to see that the Legislature does provide the financing it promised in approving the bill. South Carolinians got a taste of what's to come when the 1978 Legislature balked at providing funding for the first year that was more than twice the estimated $20 million. The appropriation was approved, even though it appears the program will eventually cost $200 million instead of $100 million.

South Carolina is lucky that it got its school finance reform approved in 1977 and not today, Carson said. "We couldn't get that bill approved today. Not with the mood of the taxpayers. They wouldn't want to commit that much money."

Friday: How Texas tried, and failed, to reform its school finance system.

Sixth in a Series

FEBRUARY 2, 1979

Attempts to reform Texas school financing crippled by Legislature's change of heart

Texas has the distinction of being the only state to have had its school finance system scrutinized by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The poor Mexican-Americans who filed the Rodriguez suit charged that the state denied them equal protection because the system depended too much on the ability of school districts to raise money from local property taxes.

In 1973, the high court found Texas' system to be constitutional, but the ruling was close (5-4) and the justices suggested that reform was in order, regardless of the constitutional questions.

Those seeking reform are still waiting.

Although the Texas Legislature appropriated millions of extra dollars for schools in 1975 and 1977, it has not significantly changed distribution patterns. The net effect of the Legislature's largess seems to be that rich are richer and the poor are slightly less poor.

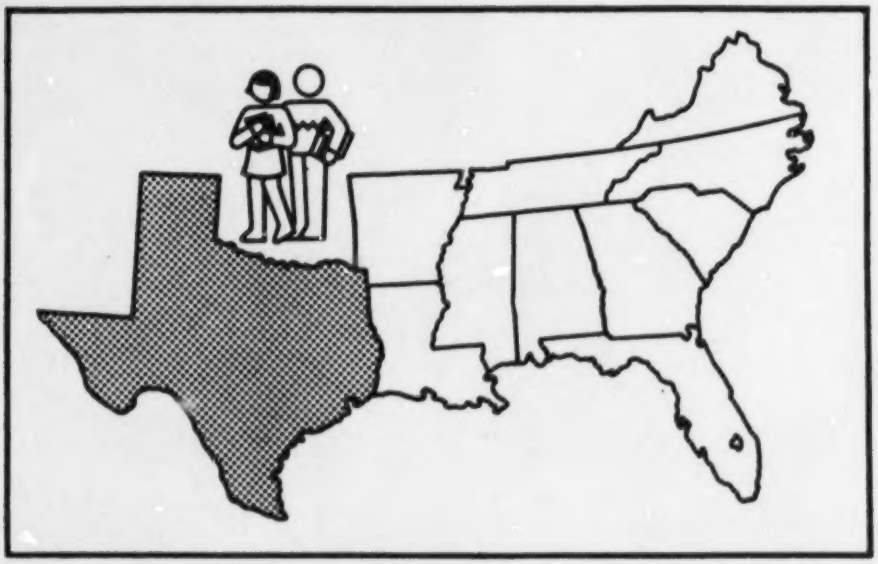
No real reform was accomplished, contends Dr. Glen Ivey, director of the Texas Research League and an expert on the state school finance system. The main reason, he said, is that the Legislature has been blessed with a revenue surplus during its past two sessions. With the money to "give a little something to everybody," it hasn't felt any pressure to reform, he said.

Raymond Bynum, finance director of the Texas Education Agency, warned that hard times would force the Legislature to make "some hard decisions."

There's no doubt that everybody has benefitted from the extra state money, said Albert Cortez, school finance project director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio. IDRA leaders supported the Rodriguez plaintiffs and are among the harshest critics of the state school finance system.

Preliminary findings of a study by the National Conference of State Legislators, under contract from the Legislature, cited improvements that school districts have made with the extra state money. However, according to the report, local school officials say "there's still a major difference in the quality of educational services available in different parts of the state."

IDRA would like to see a comprehensive overhaul of the system, Cortez said, including allocation of state funds for all educational costs, including new school buildings. A plan should be designed to equalize the school tax burden for all state residents, he said. The state also should consider limiting the amount of money local school districts can spend, and guarantee all districts a reason-



able amount of money for their tax efforts, he said.

The differences in the wealth among Texas school districts are far greater than in other Southern states. School districts' assessed valuation in 1975, based on average daily attendance, ranged from $11,925 to $16,859,078 per pupil, averaging $91,625 per pupil, according to the Governor's Office of Education Resources Estimates.

During the 1977-78 school year, per-pupil expenditures in the school districts ranged from $685 to $35,185, according to TEA figures.

There are 1,080 school districts in Texas. Many with high per-pupil expenditures are blatant tax havens, which have a handful of students in residence but generally do not operate schools. According to a TEA official, they have "school" once every two years to comply with state law. Otherwise, their students attend schools in other districts and residents are saved from taxing themselves for ongoing schools.

A certain clue to identifying a tax haven is an enrollment of fewer than 25 pupils. More than half the state's school districts have fewer than 500 students; many of those are tax haven districts, but some are small because they're in isolated areas.

Consolidation to eliminate the tax havens is not even discussed in the state today, and TEA officials say the agency is prohibited by law from doing anything to promote consolidation.

A 1968 school finance study, directed by Ivey, recommended the consolidation of almost all school districts with less than 1,600 students, but no action was taken on any of the report's recommendations.

In 1975, the Legislature attempted to narrow the spending gap between rich and poor districts by increasing all districts' required contribution to the minimum program. The idea was to make less extra local money available that was not tied to equalization. The law also created another equalization fund designed to give extra money to poor districts, but critics of the measure say too many districts were eligible for the money. A compensatory education fund modeled on the federal compensatory education programs also was included in the package.

When the Legislature returned in 1977, it dismantled a key portion of the 1975 package, Ivey said. The new bill lowered the required contribution to the minimum program, freeing more local money for spending outside of the equalized program.

The 1975 act made "changes in the school finance system which would have reduced substantially the disparities in tax burdens and spending between rich and poor districts in the state, if the changes had been allowed to work," Ivey said.

The Legislature blamed its 1977 turnabout on public demands for local school tax reductions, Ivey said, but few districts took advantage of the tax break. They simply passed on the increased state aid to their teachers and kept property taxes stable, he explained.

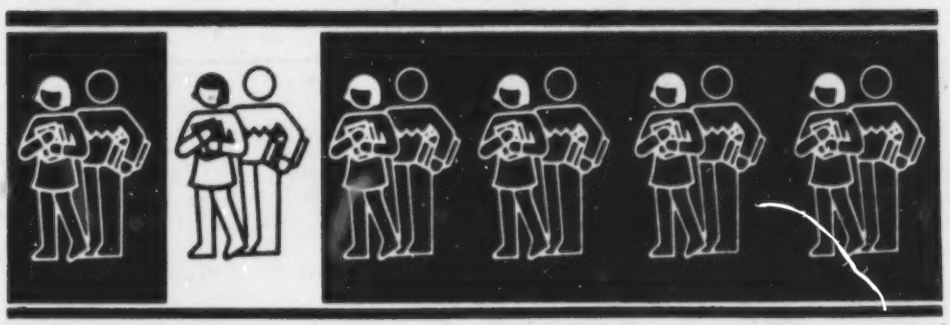
The net result of the Legislature's action was to free from the foundation program about three times as many local dollars in the rich districts as in the poor districts.

White flight to private schools has hurt public school finances

In December 1977 an $8 million bond issue to construct a new public high school in the Mississippi Delta city of Greenville failed overwhelmingly. Unsuccessful school bond issues are not unusual anywhere these days, but the results of the Greenville vote were predictable in light of the size of the proposal and the fact that a significant number of white taxpayers in the school district have children in private schools.

The public school population was about 70 percent black for that school year.

Communities all over the South experienced massive white flight to private segregationist schools at the beginning of this decade when the federal courts cracked down on public school segregation. Many whites returned, but in areas with large black populations — such as the Delta — public schools remain virtually all black, although control of the schools remains in the hands of whites. Recent studies have demonstrated that many of these school districts — including several in Mississippi — lost crucial financial support when they lost white students.



Underfunding of "black" schools is not a new phenomenon. It was a critical issue in the 1954 Brown desegregation suit. Post-desegregation problems indicate that some communities intent on discriminating against black students merely shifted strategies when forced to integrate their public schools.

South Carolina school finance reformers were able to overcome the segregationist school powers when they succeeded in getting a reform bill for public schools through the state Legislature and into law. With a major school finance reform measure awaiting legislative action here, the question arises as to what effect the segregationist school interests might have on the Legislature.

They're already having an effect on public school finances, according to one teachers' group embittered over the Legislature's failure to enact pay raises the group supported. "Though teachers may not be aware of the fact, many legislators are anti-public education. Their votes and their support in favor of a salary increase would jeopardize their positions with their constituents who support private education." read a recent newsletter from an American Federation of Teachers' local in Mississippi.

While not agreeing totally with that statement, one public school superintendent said it's not all sour grapes. The private, segregated schools have powerful friends in the Legislature, he said, and predicted "one hell of a fight" from the Delta and southwest Mississippi if the finance reform measure reaches the Legislature. Other public school interests, however, belittle the influence of private schools.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law demonstrated in a 1977 report how private schools in South Carolina affected the financing of public school systems which gained a majority of black students after integration. The report showed a statewide pattern of "underfunding" of these school districts and concluded that the underfunding was deliberate.

The committee has attempted to duplicate the South Carolina study in Mississippi and Louisiana. But in Mississippi, the study hit a snag when complaints that funds were being raised in the name of public schools, but diverted to private schools, were found in the records of the Justice Department and the U.S. Office of Education's Office of Civil Rights. If the complaints from Tunica and Noxubee counties were true, then the information on school taxes reported to the Mississippi Department of Education, on which the Lawyers' Committee was relying for its analysis, would be inadequate. Thus, the study in Mississippi has been delayed to explore a different angle.

But the Lawyers' Committee found four school districts — Wilkinson County and Amite County in southwest Mississippi, Anquilla Line in the Delta and Canton in central Mississippi — that showed the same patterns found in South Carolina.

In South Carolina, the Lawyers' Committee found that taxes were cut in many school districts that gained a majority of black students as a result of white flight from integration. The report noted that the tax cuts resulted in savings that could be used to offset the cost of tuition in the segregated, private schools to which the whites fled.

In other districts that gained a majority of black students, school spending was allowed to lag behind other school districts despite rising costs, according to the report.

The study compared school spending in South Carolina districts that were similar in property wealth, per capita income and size of enrollment. It found that the percentage of white students determined the tax rate and local expenditures for schools — the higher the percentage of white students, the higher the tax rate.

School tax cuts which immediately followed desegregation in Mississippi were said to be justified by the general decline in enrollment. However, since these school districts had very few white students prior to desegregation, the size of the tax cuts don't appear to relate to the net loss of students.

White enrollment in Wilkinson County was 21.6 percent in 1968 and the school tax rate was 22.5 mills. In 1975, the white enrollment was 2.2 percent and the school tax rate was 13.75 mills. The tax rate remained at 13.75 mills in 1977.

Between 1968 and 1975 the local assessed valuation per student doubled, but the local revenues per student increased only $11, below the state average of $85 per student.

In 1968 white enrollment in Amite County was 35.9 percent and the tax rate was 25 mills. The schools system submitted a voluntary racial desegregation plan in 1970 which resegregated the schools according to sex, but whites boycotted the school system. Whites gradually returned during the 1970s until the white percentage reached 19.6 percent in 1975. Meanwhile, the school tax rate that had been cut, was gradually raised to 17 mills in 1975.

Amite County was the scene of a boycott by black students in 1977 over the sex segregation issue. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled later that segregation by sex was illegal and ordered the schools fully integrated.

The Anguilla Line school district has had a per pupil assessed valuation above the state average since 1968. However, property wealth in the state grew by 63 percent from 1968 to 1975, but by only 24 percent in the school district, giving rise to suspicions that property assessments were deliberately kept low; added to that were huge school tax cuts following an exodus of white students.

White enrollment was 24.7 percent in 1968 and the tax rate was 25 mills. By 1975 the white enrollment had dropped to 2.3 percent and the tax rate reduced to 14 mills where it remained in 1977. Local revenues per pupil grew by only $26.

In 1973, Tunica County blacks complained to the Justice Department and OCR about suspicions that the white school superintendent transferred money to a private school where his children were enrolled. Complaints that public school funds were somehow diverted to private schools continued to be heard from Noxubee County in 1978, but there's no record of the controversies being resolved.

Tunica County's white enrollment was 2.5 percent in 1975, down from 14.8 percent in 1968. The school tax rate was reduced from 23 to 21 mills in 1970 following desegregation, and to 20 mills in 1971. Local revenue for schools did not increase despite an increase in per pupil assessed valuation from $4,587 to $5,351. In 1975, the tax rate was increased to 22 mills where it remained in 1977.

From 1968 to 1974, local school revenues in Noxubee County remained stagnant at about $60 to $70 per pupil. But in 1974, local revenues jumped to about $109 per student. Black parents, however, charge that the public schools did not get the money.

The assessed valuation per student grew from $3,090 in 1968 to $6,632 in 1975, but local per student revenue grew by only $11.

Last in a Series

FEBRUARY 4, 1979

South growth phenomenal, but did schools gain?

This decade has been a period of unprecedented population and economic growth in the South. It should have been an excellent time for school finance reform, but there is serious doubt as to how well the South has capitalized on its growing prosperity.

Among the trends noted by the Southern Growth Policies Board in "Southern Growth Trends 1970-1976" were:

•The region (which includes the border states of West Virginia, Oklahoma, Maryland and Kentucky as well as the Old South states) had 53.2 percent of the 11.3 million population increase in the nation.

•Personal income grew at a faster rate in the South than in other areas.

•State revenues grew at a faster rate in the South for every fiscal year between 1970-71 and 1974-75.

•Unemployment rates were lower in the South than elsewhere in the nation and non-agricultural employment grew faster here than the U. S. average.

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No doubt, economic prosperity contributed to substantial increases in educational spending in the region, but education has not gotten all that it should have, said education consultant Jack Leppert. (Leppert was staff director of the Florida Senate Finance Committee and

'Tax exemptions for new industries, usually for 10 years, have been partly responsible for keeping local school revenues low.

ELAINE J. BEAN/STAFF ARTIST

helped to write school finance reform legislation for the state.) Leppert and Dorothy Routh discussed the issue in a paper for the University of Miami on the economic and educational well-being of the South: "The South has not done well either in planning or understanding our economic growth. In our rush to advance we have too often sold out our communities and our people."

In an effort to attract industry the South has offered special tax concessions that may not have been necessary, say Routh and Leppert. Citing studies of why industries choose Southern locations, they determined that the most important factors were access to markets; labor cost, availability and skill; and supplies of materials and resources.

Say Routh and Leppert: "It is of extreme importance for Southerners to note that tax costs, tax concessions and other financial inducements were not a significant locational determinant. This unnecessary catering to industry may have lost us many valuable tax dollars that could have been utilized in developing human resources which would ultimately make the area more attractive due to more skilled manpower and increased consumption."

A recent, local example involves Du Pont, which was already committed to a titanium dioxide plant in the Pass Christian School District, yet was granted a partial exemption on school taxes just days before such exemptions were outlawed on Jan. 1. Such exemptions for new industries, usually for 10 years, have been partly responsible for keeping local school revenues low, the special school finance study committee for Mississippi has concluded.

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Despite new jobs and prosperity, personal income is still low in the South and the gap between rich and poor people remains where it was 25 years ago, according to recent studies. The reason, said Leppert, is that the South has attracted mostly low-wage industries. Blue chip industries pass on the South in part because it lacks the trained labor force needed, he said. Continued under-investment in education adds to the likelihood that such industries will continue to pass on the South, he added.

There are indications that poor people bear a heavier burden toward financing public services, such as education, in the South than anywhere else. It is an issue addressed by the Southern Regional Council in a school finance handbook for Southerners: "The major share of school money in the South is raised by states from tax sources that do not do nearly enough to distribute the burden fairly among all citizens."

A recent study by D. Kent Halstead for the National Institute of Education — "Tax Wealth in Fifty States" — shows that Southern states depend greatly on sales taxes for revenue, but do not collect revenues to their capacity from residential, commercial and farm property taxes, nor from personal income or business taxes.

According to the study, Mississippi makes a higher-than-average tax effort relative to its capacity. The study measures tax effort against potential under a given tax structure. And in Mississippi, the sales tax is the backbone of the state tax structure.

Of the general fund revenues for the state's 1979 budget, 45.2 percent came from the state's 5 percent general sales tax. That is more than twice the national average for state general fund revenues. When you add revenues from selective sales taxes — on such items as alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and motor fuels — the sales tax takes on even greater importance.

The sales tax is considered a regressive tax because poor people spend a higher proportion of their income than do the non-poor on consumer goods subject to sales taxes, thus bearing a higher tax burden. Yet, Mississippi, the state with the poorest people in the nation, depends mostly on sales taxes to finance public needs.

Texas and Florida also collect a high percentage of revenues from sales taxes, but both exempt food and medicine. Mississippi does not exempt food but the legislature approved a bill last week to exempt prescription drugs. Last year, it exempted utility bills. Tennessee taxes only prescription drugs at a lower rate than other items. Virginia and North Carolina exempt medicine and Louisiana taxes medicine and food at a lower rate.

The graduated income tax, a progressive tax that is relatively easy to collect and hits hardest those most able to pay taxes, meets with heavy resistance in the South. Tennessee, Texas and Florida do not have an income tax and the Halstead study showed almost all other Southern states, including Mississippi, do not collect to their capacities income taxes.

Every Southern state collects less revenue from residential, commercial and industrial and farm property than they are capable of, according to the study.

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1976

Name	News Organization	Study Topic
David Bednarek	*The Milwaukee Journal* Milwaukee, WI	Desegregation
Michael Bowler	*The Sun* Baltimore, MD	Textbook Selection
Helen Carringer	*The Beacon Journal* Akron, OH	Parent Power
James A. Killacky	*The Daily Oklahoman* Oklahoma, OK	Teacher Unions
Jacquelyn King	WRR News Radio Dallas, TX	Testing
Andrew Miller	*The Kansas City Star* Kansas City, KS	Testing
Lael Morgan	*Tundra Times* Fairbanks, AK	Bilingual Education
Linda Stahl	*The Courier-Journal* Louisville, KY	Basic Skills
Stanley Wellborn	*U.S. News & World Report* Washington, D.C.	Federal Education Policy

FORD FELLOWS IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNALISM
1977

Name	News Organization	Study Topic
Constantine Angelos	*The Seattle Times* Seattle, WA	Basic Skills
Muriel Cohen	*The Boston Globe* Boston, MA	Teacher Education
Rebecca Kuzins	*The Muskegon Chronicle* Muskegon, MI	Special Education
Lorenzo Middleton, Jr.	*The Washington Star* Washington, D.C.	Desegregation
Cynthia Parsons	*The Christian Science Monitor* Boston, MA	School Finance
Wayne F. Reilly	*The Bangor Daily News* Bangor, ME	Competency Based Testing
Dale Alan Rice	*The Post-Standard* Syracuse, NY	Magnet Schools

FORD FELLOWS IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNALISM
1978

Name	News Organization	Study Topic
Huntly Collins	*The Oregonian* Portland, OR	Gifted & Talented Education
Jimmie Covington	*The Commercial Appeal* Memphis, TN	Competency Based Testing
Joe Donovan	KYW News Radio Philadelphia, PA	Basic Skills
Gary Fife	*United Indian Planners News* Washington, D.C.	Indian Education

Robert Frahm	*The Journal Times* Racine, WI	Competency Based Testing
Diane Granat	*Chicago Daily Herald* Arlington Heights, IL	Parent Power
Saundra Ivey	*The Tennessean* Nashville, TN	School Finance: Tax Revolt Issues
Rick Janka	*The Milwaukee Sentinel* Milwaukee, WI	Achieving Quality Education
Rosa Morales	KCET Television Los Angeles, CA	Desegregation
Ethel Payne	*St. Louis Sentinel* Newspapers St. Louis, MO	Black Colleges
Donald Speich	*Los Angeles Times* Los Angeles, CA	Effect of Proposition 13
Monte Trammer	*The Baltimore Sun* Baltimore, MD	Declining Enrollments and School Closing
Linda Williams	*Daily Herald/South Mississippi Sun* Biloxi, MS	School Finance Patterns in the South

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1979

Name	News Organization	Study Topic
Robert Benjamin	*Cincinnati Post* Cincinnati, OH	Educating Low-Income Students
John Cummins	*The Salt Lake Tribune* Salt Lake City, UT	Education in High-Growth Areas
Christie Dunphy	*The Evening Gazette* Worcester, MA	Declining Enrollment in High Schools
Charles Hardy	*The Charlotte Observer* Charlotte, NC	Black Achievement/ Operation Push
Wista Johnson	*The New York Amsterdam News* New York, NY	Health Education in Urban Schools
Mark Liff	*New York Daily News* New York, NY	Education of Indo-Chinese Refugee Children
Bette Orsini	*St. Petersburg Times* St. Petersburg, FL	Suicide/Depression on College Campuses
Barbara Reinhardt	*Options in Education* National Public Radio Washington, D.C.	Teenage Pregnancy and the Schools
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Fran Zupan	*The Columbia Record* Columbia, SC	Sex Barriers in Job Preparation

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